Working to Ban Flavored Tobacco Products in Colusa County Final Evaluation Report 2017–2021



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ABSTRACT

Within Colusa County there are 37 tobacco retailers, each of which promotes, advertises, and sells tobacco products. The most recent survey of tobacco retailers in Colusa County in 2013 showed that almost all (85%) sold candy-, mint-, and liquor-flavored tobacco products compared to 79% statewide. To reduce tobacco-related disparities among Colusa County's youth, Hispanic/Latino, and low-income populations, the Colusa County Tobacco Education Program (CCTEP) worked to get one of the county's three jurisdictions (the City of Colusa, the City of Williams, and the County of Colusa) to adopt a ban on the sale and distribution of mentholated cigarettes and other flavored tobacco products by December 31, 2021. The objective was not met.

CCTEP conducted educational presentations with a variety of community-based organizations regarding the need for a Flavored Tobacco Products Ban. Project staff also did educational outreach and key informant interviews (KII) with policymakers. The KIIs showed no support for a ban. CCTEP conducted a Young Adult Tobacco Purchase Survey that showed a 6% illegal sales rate to youth, as well as data collection activities that were part of the statewide Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community campaign. Store observations, key informant interviews and public opinion surveys documented the prevalence of unhealthy products being sold, as well as key community leaders and public support for related policies. Since baseline observations in 2013, the number of stores selling flavored tobacco products has remained high, at 86%. All (100%) of the tobacco products ban was high, increasing from 51% to 72% since 2014. Support from key informants increased from one of six informants in support in 2016, to four of five in 2019.

Despite illegal sales to minors and community support for a flavored tobacco products ban, the project was hampered by a conservative, rural county environment in which policymakers are reluctant to increase restrictions on small businesses, lack of law enforcement support, and the COVID 19 pandemic and redirection of staff to contact tracing and other pandemic-related duties.

AIM AND OUTCOME

Due to the high rate of tobacco use in the county, the Colusa County Tobacco Education Program (CCTEP) decided to focus efforts on a ban on the sale of menthol cigarettes and other flavored tobacco products, which would limit access to youth, people of low socioeconomic status, and Hispanics/Latinos in the community, all California Tobacco Control Program priority populations. CCTEP's objective:

By December 31, 2021, at least one jurisdiction in Colusa County (such as Colusa, Williams, and the unincorporated areas) will adopt a policy to eliminate the sale and distribution of flavored and menthol tobacco products. This is a primary objective addressing Communities of Excellence Indicators 3.2.9 and 3.2.1.

By the end of the 2017–2021 work plan, CCTEP's objective was not met. To date, none of the three jurisdictions in Colusa County—Colusa, Williams, or the unincorporated areas of the county—have adopted a ban on the sale of mentholated and other flavored tobacco products.

BACKGROUND

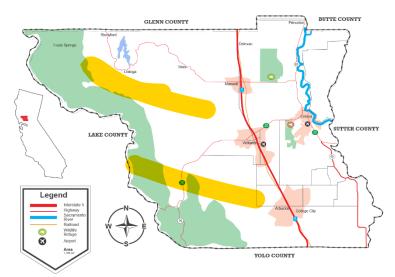
Colusa County is a rural county of 21,419 people (US Census 2010) located in the central valley part of California, northwest of the state capitol, Sacramento. The population is spread over 1,156 square miles in two, small incorporated cities (Colusa and Williams, with populations of 5,956 and 5,133, respectively), and an unincorporated area that is home to approximately 10,330 people. There are seven census-designated places in Colusa County, and one other unincorporated community.

The population is a mix of 39.8% non-

Hispanic Whites, 55.1% Hispanics/Latinos of any race, 0.8% African Americans, 1.2% Asian, and 1.4% Native Americans, and 1.7% from two or more races. The median household income is \$44,981 (US Census 2010) and 14.9% of the population lives below the poverty line compared to 13.7% in California (US Census 2011–2015). More than onefourth (29%) of the population is under the age of 18 (US Census 2010).

Typical of rural areas, the overall smoking rate in Colusa County at the time the project began was 16.6%,

Exhibit 1. Colusa County, California



higher than the state average of 12.7%, with 10.0% smoking prevalence among high schoolers (California Health Interview Survey 2012–2014). Given that over 6,200 minors in the county are potentially at risk, curbing the tobacco use and uptake among that population is a priority for CCTEP.

Within Colusa County there are 37 retailers, 11 in the City of Colusa, 12 in the City of Williams, and 14 in the unincorporated area, each of which promotes, advertises, and sells tobacco products (California Board of Equalization, 2012). In 2013, the most recent survey of Colusa County tobacco retail stores, almost all (94%) of the stores sold menthol cigarettes and 85% of stores sold any of the three flavor varieties (sweet, liquor, or mint) of non-cigarette tobacco.

Consumption of flavored tobacco products has increased among youth in recent years; they are considered "starter" products that help new users establish daily habits to promote addiction to tobacco products (California Medical Association, 2016). Flavored tobacco products are widely available and their sweet flavors (e.g., birthday cake, cherry, vanilla, etc.) may appeal to youth (Ambrose et al., 2013–2014). Moreover, youth are three times more sensitive to tobacco advertising than adults (Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, 2016).

In the most recent public opinion survey of Colusa County residents in 2016, only 39% of residents supported a law to ban the sale of flavored tobacco products like menthol cigarettes and fruit-flavored little cigars. This information was factored into CCTEP's Communities of Excellence (CX) Needs Assessment process to determine priorities for the 2017–2021 work plan. Seven members of the community—including project staff, adult coalition members, and partners representing health and human services agencies, law enforcement, community-based organizations, the schools, and youth groups—took part in the process. Of the 15 indicators assessed, a ban on flavored tobacco products received a low rating, indicating the need for extensive community and policymaker education. Moreover, the political environment in rural Colusa County tends to be ultraconservative. But, given the need to curb the appeal of flavored tobacco products to youth, CCTEP opted to pursue a flavored tobacco products ban for the 2017–2021 funding cycle. This is the first funding cycle during which the project decided to tackle this type of objective.

EVALUATION METHODS AND DESIGN

The evaluation plan provided formative data to inform intervention strategies and activities during the 2017–2021 scope of work, as well as summative data to confirm the adoption of a legislated policy that bans the sale and distribution of flavored tobacco products. The study design is non-experimental (there were no control groups) and only process evaluation measures were utilized, as Exhibit 2 illustrates.

Process data were collected through six objective-specific evaluation activities:

- 1. An Education/Participant Survey (Post-Training Assessment) was conducted in year one with a census of training participants to measure change in knowledge regarding flavored tobacco products.
- 2. An Education/Participant Survey (Post-Training Assessment) was conducted in year two with a census of training participants to measure knowledge regarding the specific photographic technique used to collect qualitative data in the form of photographs, called Photovoice.
- 3. A Young Adult Tobacco Purchase Survey (YATPS) was also conducted with a census of tobacco retailers in the county in year two to measure the rate of illegal sales of tobacco products to minors.
- 4-5. Two rounds of key informant interviews were conducted to measure support for/opposition to a ban on flavored tobacco products with purposive samples: one round with city council members and retailers in Colusa and Williams in year one, and one round with retailers in Colusa and Williams in year two.
- 6. The California Student Tobacco Survey was conducted via a contract with UC San Diego with a random sample of 10th and 11th graders from three middle schools and three high schools in year two to measure local adolescent use rates of tobacco and marijuana.

In addition to objective-specific evaluation activities, the project also engaged in a number of statewide data collection activities. A store observation survey, key informant interviews, public opinion survey, and media record were conducted in years two and three as part of the Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community (HSHC) statewide data collection efforts coordinated by the California Tobacco Control Program (CTCP) among all Local Lead Agencies in California. These

activities were designed to measure the availability of various tobacco products in stores, policymaker and public opinion on a variety of tobacco policies, including a flavors ban, and the type and amount of media coverage generated. Only results from the HSHC evaluation activities that are relevant to the advancement of the objective are described in detail in this report.

As required, another round of key informant interviews conducted in year four with a purposive sample of key community leaders was designed to further explore current knowledge and attitudes regarding a flavored tobacco products ban as part of CCTEP's End Commercial Tobacco Campaign (ECTC) starting in 2022. In a small rural county such as Colusa, there are a limited number of key informants. To avoid interview fatigue, policymakers, key community leaders, and retailers in a variety of jurisdictions were chosen to participate.

Training Data Collectors. Youth and adult volunteers helped CCTEP collect the data and were trained before each survey. Four data collection trainings were provided; one with a total of three youth (age 18-19) for the YATPS, and four young adults and two adults to prepare for the tobacco retailer store observation. For the YATPS, CCTEP trained the young adult volunteers using the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) materials provided. Participants practiced how to implement the survey and were assessed for accuracy until there was agreement between the multiple observers and what had been observed. For the HSHC tobacco retailer store observation, project staff trained the youth and adult volunteers using the instrument and protocol provided by Stanford University, and quizzed participants with Kahoot!, a learning game played in a group setting. Project staff personally collected the public intercept survey and key informant interview data and was trained by the Tobacco Control Evaluation Center (TCEC) at regional training events and/or the project's Evaluation Consultant. The University of California, San Diego, fielded the California Student Tobacco Survey.

Data Analysis. Data analysis used a combination of descriptive, statistical, and content analysis techniques to report on both quantitative and qualitative data. A content analysis was used to analyze the media record and the open-ended questions on the key informant interviews and post-training assessments. The public opinion survey, store observation survey, YATPS, and the closed-ended questions on the interviews were analyzed by calculating frequencies and percentages. For more information on each of these evaluation activities, see Exhibit 2.

Limitations. The major limitations of this design are: 1) not having a comparison group to provide another perspective in assessing the intervention's strengths and weaknesses; 2) while all volunteers were trained using the state protocol for the HSHC observations of tobacco retailers and several measures were taken to ensure data collectors understood the materials, there may be inconsistency in the estimated observations of data among volunteers; and 3) the convenience sample used for the public opinion survey may reflect the views of those who chose to participate rather than the entire county population.

Evaluation Activity	Purpose	Sample	Instrument Source ¹	Analysis Method	Timing /Waves
Education/ Participant Survey– Post-Training Assessments	Assess changes in knowledge regarding flavored tobacco products	Census of 4–21 training participants (varied by training)	Project Director (Appendix A)	Descriptive statistics	Year 1 One wave each
Education/ Participant Survey– Post-Training Assessment for Photovoice	Assess changes in knowledge, confidence/ preparation, intent to engage in Photovoice activities	Census of 4 youth training participants	Project Director (Appendix B)	Descriptive statistics	Year 1 One wave
Key Informant Interviews	Measure the level of support and opposition to a ban on flavored tobacco products	Purposive sample of 3 city council members and 2 retailers in Colusa and Williams	Project Director (Appendix C)	Content analysis	Years 1–2 One wave
Young Adult Tobacco Purchase Survey	Measure the rate of illegal sales of tobacco products to minors, and signage	Census of 35 tobacco retailers in the county	CDPH	Descriptive statistics	Year 2 One wave
Statewide HSHC Store Observation Survey	Measure the availability of various tobacco products	Census of the county's 32 tobacco retailers	Stanford University	Descriptive statistics	Year 2 One wave
Key Informant Interviews–Retailers	Measure the level of support and opposition to a ban on flavored tobacco products	Purposive sample of 5 retailers in Colusa and Williams	Evaluation Consultant (Appendix D)	Content analysis	Year 2 One wave
California Student Tobacco Survey (CSTS)	To assess use, knowledge, and attitudes toward tobacco products and marijuana use	Random sample of 557 8 th , 10 th , and 11 th graders from 3 middle schools and 3 high schools in the county	University of California, San Diego	Descriptive statistics	Year 2 One wave
Statewide HSHC Key Informant Interviews	Measure the level of support and opposition to a variety of tobacco control issues, including a flavors ban	Purposive sample of 5 policymakers, key community leaders and retailers in the county ²	TCEC	Descriptive statistics and content analysis	Year 3 One wave
Statewide HSHC Public Intercept Survey	Measure public opinion on policy issues in the retail environment	Convenience sample of 101 county residents	TCEC	Descriptive statistics	Year 3 One wave
Statewide HSHC Media Activity Record	Measure the level of support or opposition, as well as reach	Purposive sample of 2 print and online media outlets	TCEC	Descriptive statistics and content analysis	Years 1–4 Four waves
Key Informant	Measure policymaker	Purposive sample of	Evaluation	Descriptive	Year 4

Exhibit 2. Key Process Evaluation Activities

¹ Standardized instruments provided by Stanford University, CDPH, and TCEC were used without modifications and, for that reason, are not included in the Appendices. Due to staff turnover, the number of questions that were added for Colusa County to the statewide instrument used by the University of California, San Diego, is unknown.

² A total of 18 interviews were attempted between November and December 2019; five interviews were completed.

Evaluation Activity	Purpose	Sample	Instrument Source ¹	Analysis Method	Timing /Waves
Interviews–End Commercial Tobacco Campaign (ECTC)	support and opposition to a flavors ban	5 key community leaders in the county	Consultant (Appendix E)	statistics and content analysis	One wave

IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS

The sequence of intervention and evaluation activities was designed so that early actions laid the foundation for progress forward, informing the timing, messaging, and strategies of activities that followed. Exhibit 2 provides an overview of the project activity timeline, including key events, in chronological order.

Exhibit 2. Key Intervention and Evaluation Activities in Chronological Order

YEAR 1 - 17/18	YEAR 2 - 18/19	YEAR 3 - 19/20	YEAR 4 - 20/21
Midwest Academy Strategizing with coalition members Education presentations at community events/meetings Engage and train youth Photovoice project with youth Media campaign activities Key informant interviews (KII) with policymakers	 Education presentations at community events/meetings KIIs with policymakers and retailers Engage and train youth YATPS with youth involvement Consumer-tested Flavors Fact Sheet in English and Spanish Store Observation Survey* with youth involvement KIIs with tobacco retailers Coordinating with UC San Diego for California Student Tobacco Survey (CSTS) Media campaign activities 	 Public opinion survey* KIIs* with policymakers Consumer-tested CSTS Fact Sheet in English and Spanish COVID-19 Stay-at- Home Order 3/20 Media campaign activities 	 Staff turnover Media campaign activities KIIs with key community leaders Educational packets distributed to policymakers

*Evaluation activity that was part of a statewide data collection effort coordinated by the California Tobacco Control Program among all Local Lead Agencies in California.

Strategizing with the coalition

As the first step in the scope of work, project staff convened a strategy session with eight tobacco coalition members and other key stakeholders. The purpose of the strategy session was to think through the process necessary to get a Flavors Ban adopted in at least one jurisdiction in Colusa County. Possible target jurisdictions included the City of Colusa (the county seat), the City of Williams, or the unincorporated area of the county. Part of the Midwest Academy Strategy session included trying to flesh out information about policymakers to identify a potential policy champion. However, none of the coalition members were aware of individual policymakers' political stance or beliefs around tobacco, so a target jurisdiction was not narrowed down. Nonetheless, CCTEP knew that in order to sway the local policymakers, it had to continue to provide evidence that illegal sales to minors was a problem and that flavored tobacco products were readily available. The next steps were to engage youth, then start on community and policymaker education.

Youth involvement

Involving youth in data collection efforts and reporting data can be crucial in policy campaigns. For that reason, early in the program's first year, CCTEP conducted recruitment by contacting previous youth coalition members, and various youth-serving organizations, including Colusa One Stop, the Colusa County Office of Education Tobacco Use Prevention Education program, a local health sorority at the University of California at Davis, and by making presentations to health education classes at Chico State University. With the youth who were recruited, project staff then provided a series of trainings and activities.

In the spring of year one, CCTEP conducted a training with four high school youth in preparation for conducting a Photovoice project in March 2018. The training included a presentation on the history of Photovoice, the four key steps to the Photovoice process, staying safe, and describing the photos taken. The instrument and protocol were developed by Caroline Wang and Mary Ann Burris and were used without modification. At the end of the training, participants completed a post-training assessment that showed a 64% increase in knowledge and understanding of Photovoice and how to implement it.

In the fall of year two, CCTEP conducted a training with three young adults, ages 18-19, in preparation for the YATPS conducted in December 2019. The training included a presentation on tobacco laws, the STAKE Act, youth access to tobacco, and the need for banning flavored tobacco products. Participants were also instructed how to conduct the YATPS and document the buy attempt, which included a simulation of the actual survey. The instrument and protocol were provided by CDPH and was used without modifications. During the training, participants practiced implementing the survey and were assessed for accuracy. To reduce error in the data by ensuring all training participants were seeing and documenting the same thing, the simulation was continued until there was agreement between the multiple observers and what had been observed. For the results of the YATPS, see *Illegal sales to underage youth* below.

Additional youth, along with adults, were recruited to participate in the HSHC statewide data collection effort for the store observation in year two of the work plan. In addition to making contact with the youth groups mentioned above, to recruit adult volunteers project staff also contacted the Adult Education Coordinator from the County Office of Education. In March 2019,

the five youth and one adult participated in a six-hour data collector training to learn how to do the store observations, which included learning about various tobacco products. The instrument and protocol were provided by Stanford University as part of the statewide data collection effort. CCTEP conducted the training using a tobacco products' display and Kahoot! quizzes for hands-on practice. It was not possible to do field practice in actual stores because the training was conducted in one of the targeted cities and traveling to another city was not practical. During the training, participants were assessed for accuracy using a Kahoot! learning game so that trainers could correct common mistakes until sufficient inter-rater reliability was achieved.

Educating the community

To educate the community and gather support, the project made presentations to a variety of community-based organizations including the Rotary Club (September 2017), Migrant Camp Parent Group (March 2018), and the Pediatric Multi-Disciplinary Team (May 2018). A total of 42 members of the community—parents, business leaders, healthcare professionals—were educated about the topic of flavored tobacco products, tobacco marketing toward youth, and electronic smoking devices. As evidenced by the post-training assessments conducted, participants showed an increase in knowledge regarding each of these topics. CCTEP also made presentations to public health and county programs serving rural and Hispanic/Latino residents, including the Colusa County Partners for Health (fall 2018), SNAP Ed partners, and nursing staff and interns, which included programs serving low socioeconomic status individuals in the county (spring 2019).

In addition to making presentations, a fact sheet was developed that included tobacco use prevalence among local youth. Local results from the 2016 Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community campaign were also included to show the prevalence of flavored tobacco products in Colusa County stores. Eight members of the community participated in a consumer-testing session in June 2018 to assess the look, feel, messaging, images, action steps, and overall design. As a result, images and colors were changed, as well as some of the language to shorten the material and make it easier to read. With the two largest racial groups being White and Hispanic/Latino, the project also translated the fact sheet into Spanish. The flavored tobacco products fact sheets were handed out to community members and policymakers during educational presentations and one-on-one meetings throughout the 2017–2021 work plan.

Youth also conducted a Photovoice project in the spring of 2018. After taking pictures of tobacco use in the community, the four trained youth developed a PowerPoint presentation that was displayed at the Colusa County Fair from June 7–10, 2018 (Appendix F). Two youth were present at the exhibit to explain the project and answer questions from the community. An estimated 90 county fair attendees visited the exhibit.

Engaging policymakers and conducting key informant interviews

During spring 2018, in the project's first year, CCTEP met with policymakers and key community leaders to conduct key informant interviews. The purpose of the interviews was to explore policymaker views on smoking and tobacco use, and prohibiting the sale and distribution of flavored tobacco products. The instrument was designed by the Project Director and included nine questions (Appendix D). Information from the LOOP and the CTCP regarding the dangers of flavored tobacco products and how flavors make it more enticing to use nicotine products were highlighted

during the discussion. Local, regional, and statewide results from the 2016 Healthy Stores campaign were also included to show that flavored tobacco products are readily available in local stores.

CCTEP found that of the three purposively selected city council members and two key community leaders (who are also tobacco retailers) in the cities of Colusa and Williams, none were in support of ban on flavored tobacco products. Informants expressed a range of reasons, some for a ban but mostly against, which are summarized in Exhibit 4.

Exhibit 4. Summary of Facilitators and Challenges/Barriers to Policy Adoption (n=5)

FACILITATORS	CHALLENGES/BARRIERS
It's a public health issue.	If a person is 21, that is their choice and their right.
Tobacco companies are targeting kids.	Vaping is something for teens that is cool and doesn't hurt you.
Flavors make tobacco products enticing to youth	"I have no idea" if these products are easily accessible.
Flavored tobacco products are available throughout the city.	The city is not in the business of telling people how to live.

One informant, who was one of the two store owners interviewed, said that to prevent access of flavored tobacco products to youth, you have to "enforce the law." The informant noted:

"Retailers needs to properly ID kids. Adults have the right to make their own choices. We [the store he owns] considered going smoke-free, but couldn't because of franchise restrictions,"

Although the project hoped that the key informant interviews would clarify which jurisdiction in Colusa County to target and uncover a possible policy champion, this did not happen. As a result, CCTEP knew it would have to gather evidence of illegal sales to minors in the community, then conduct extensive community and policymaker education.

Illegal sales to underage youth

With the help of the trained young adult volunteers, in December 2018, at the beginning of the project's second year, CCTEP conducted the YATPS in 34 of the 35 tobacco retail stores throughout the county. A census of the 35 local retail stores was desired. However, one of the stores was closed at the time of the survey. The plan was to conduct the YATPS using the standard protocol with a consummated buy, but funds were not included in CCTEP's budget, so an unconsummated buy was used.

The YATPS was conducted by a survey team composed of two young adult surveyors, ranging in age from 18-19. As indicated by the standard, unconsummated buy protocol, stores were visited by the youth, one of which attempted to purchase tobacco. If the retailer proceeds to sell the

merchandise without any additional questions, the youth attempting the purchase was to cancel the transaction and leave. If the retailer asks for identification or asks the youth's age, the individual is instructed to tell the truth. The young adults then complete the data collection instrument together upon leaving the store before going on to the next store.

Of the stores surveyed in 2018, 6% sold tobacco to the underage decoy (Exhibit 5). Illegal sales occurred in the unincorporated area only among two stores; there were no illegal sales in the cities of Colusa or Williams.

	# of Stores Surveyed	ID Requested	STAKE Act/ Warning Signs	# of Stores That Sold	Illegal Sales Rate
Colusa County					
Uninc. Areas	12	9	3	2	6%
Colusa	10	7	6	0	0%
Williams	12	10	4	0	0%
TOTAL	34	26	13	2	6%

Exhibit 5. 2018 Young Adult Tobacco Purchase Survey showed a 6% buy rate among Colusa County tobacco retailers (n=34)

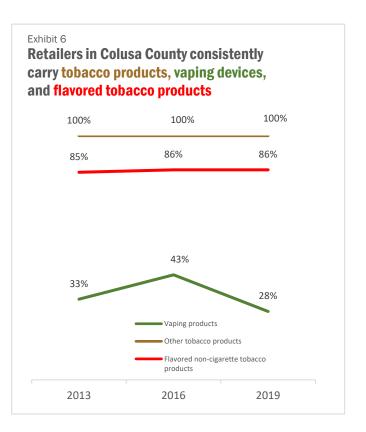
Clerks that asked for ID were less likely to sell to the underage decoy. However, in both of the sales, the clerk sold to the minor anyway, even after asking for ID. The presence or absence of STAKE Act/Age-of-Sale Warning signs do not appear to have any correlation because the stores that sold display the warning signs.

Following the YATPS, CCTEP issued a "report card" to each retailer, wrote an article, and placed ads in the local print media congratulating the stores that were in compliance. Community presentations, Facebook posts, and fact sheets used these findings to illustrate the need for a ban on flavored tobacco products.

Store observations

With the help of the trained youth and adult volunteers, in April 2019, the project's second year, CCTEP conducted the HSHC store observations in 30 of 32 tobacco retailers throughout the county. The project opted to include every store in the sample for this statewide data collection effort to allow for comparisons between the 2013 baseline and 2016 follow-up round of observations. However, two stores were closed for the season. Nonetheless, having almost a census of the stores provided a more accurate picture of the local retail environment that would be more compelling to policymakers than just a portion of the stores.

As depicted in Exhibit 6, every retailer sold tobacco products like cigarettes (100%). However, what was alarming was the consistent presence of flavored tobacco products among the 2013, 2016, and 2019 surveys (85%-86%). Also important to our work plan was a measure of the prevalence of e-cigarettes. The percentage of stores in Colusa County that carried vaping devices fluctuated between 33%, 43%, and 28% during these same surveys. While some people believe that e-cigarettes are responsible for a decline in youth cigarette smoking, a recent study by the University of California, San Francisco, found that ecigarettes are actually attracting a new population of adolescents who might not otherwise have smoked tobacco products (Glantz, 2017). The availability of ecigarettes in tobacco retail stores in Colusa County is troubling because it makes it easier for youth to access these products.

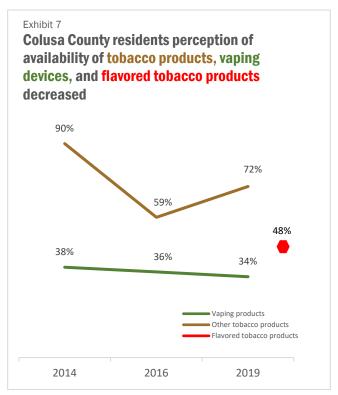


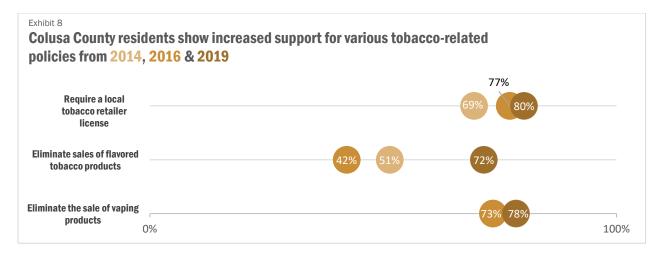
As with the YATPS data, CCTEP intended to use these findings in presentations and fact sheets to illustrate availability of tobacco products in local communities, the need for enforcement of underage sales, and the need for a ban on flavored tobacco products. However, due to the COVID-19-pandemic and because this data was embargoed until June 2020, project staff submitted a press release coordinated with Yuba and Sutter Local Lead Agencies to the local newspapers in October 2020 that was published by the *Colusa County Sun Herald* on December 2, 2020.

Public opinion

To explore public sentiment about a variety of tobacco policy options, CCTEP conducted a public opinion survey as part of the HSHC statewide data collection process. Three CCTEP staff members and one public health intern collected the data via a public intercept survey methodology utilized in Arbuckle, Maxwell, and Colusa at four different community events between October 26–November 26, 2019. The survey was also distributed online from November 18–December 6, 2019.

Exhibit 7 shows the perception of availability of products from a convenience sample of 116 survey participants (51 in Colusa, 18 in Williams, and 47 in Arbuckle, Grimes, Maxwell, Princeton and Stonyford) from the 2019 survey, compared to surveys conducted in 2014 and 2016. Note that there is a different perception of availability than actual availability of products. For example, only 72% of respondents indicated that tobacco products were readily available in stores.³ However, the store observation identified that 100% of the stores in the same jurisdictions carried cigarettes, chew, cigarillos, and other types of tobacco products (Exhibit 6). This information showed the need for more community education to raise awareness among the general public. Nonetheless, Colusa County residents showed increasing support for tobacco-related policies in 2019, compared to public opinion surveys collected in 2014 and 2016 (Exhibit 8).





However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, redirection of staff to pandemic-related duties, and unresponsiveness of policymakers, these results were never shared.

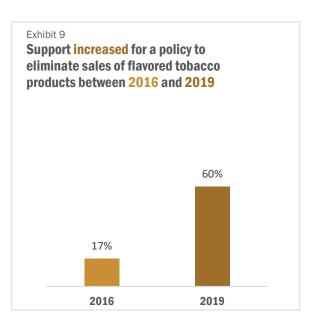
Comparing policymaker attitude changes over time

CCTEP attempted to collect information from policymakers as part of the HSHC statewide data collection effort in a round of key informant interviews in Fall 2019. Five interviews were the goal. A total of 18 were attempted. However, after repeated tries to schedule with policymakers, project staff cast a wider net, resulting in five interviews completed: two policymakers, one retailer, and two

³ Note that the perception of flavored tobacco products was not assessed in the 2014 and 2016 surveys.

influential community members.

Informants indicated some support for eliminating the sales of flavored tobacco products (60%) (Exhibit 9). However, as noted, the sample size was small and did not include many policymakers, and for that reason may not have represented the views of all policymakers within Colusa County. Although promising, these results continue to indicate the need for education, particularly with local policymakers, but also with influential community leaders and tobacco retailers. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and redirection of project staff to contact tracing and other duties, these results were never shared with policymakers.



Tobacco use prevalence among Colusa County youth

To determine tobacco-use prevalence among local youth, CCTEP participated in a statewide survey fielded by the University of California, San Diego, during the 2017–2018 school year. A total of 557 Colusa County 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students from three middle schools and three high schools were included in the study. The survey was conducted from May to October 2018. The main findings of the survey were the following (Zhu, S-H, et al, 2019):

- · Almost 30% of middle and high school students have tried a tobacco product.
- Current use of any tobacco product was low, with 9.8% of Colusa County students using at least one product in the past 30 days.
- E-cigarettes were the most popular tobacco product, with 6.6% of Colusa County students using them in the past 30 days.
- Current use of combustible tobacco products was very low, less than 3%.
- Over 43% of students in Colusa County believe it is easy to obtain e-cigarettes.

Although the current tobacco product use was considered low by UC San Diego researchers, the survey provided data that would be compelling to local policymakers because it was about local youth.

To educate the community and gather support, a fact sheet was developed that included this information. As the results of the 2019 HSHC Store Observation Survey were not yet available, local results from the 2016 HSHC Store Observation Results were included in the fact sheet to show the prevalence of flavored tobacco products in Colusa County stores. Two members of the community participated in a consumer-testing session in September 2019 to assess the look, feel, messaging, images, action steps, and overall design. As a result, the colors, background, text, and e-cigarette images were changed, as well as some of the language and font size (Appendix G). The project also translated the fact sheet into Spanish.

The following month, a press event was conducted on October 3, 2019, in coordination with Sutter

County and Yuba County Tobacco Control programs. The event included inviting local media and coordinating with Yuba and Sutter spokespeople, key messaging visual fact sheets, a data gallery walk, and a press release. Press packets were prepped with a media alert, press release and information on the benefits of a policy to eliminate the sale of flavored/menthol tobacco products. The press event resulted in two stories being published in Colusa County news outlets.

The intent was to distribute the fact sheet to local policymakers and to the general public at community events. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and later turnover in staff, the information was not shared directly with policymakers or with the community.

Challenges and barriers

Since it had been difficult for the project to schedule key informant interviews with policymakers, the Colusa County Advocates for Change (CYAC), the project's youth coalition, planned to make a presentation to the Colusa School Board on April 20, 2020. However, in March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic shelter-at-home orders began and the school board meetings were postponed. Moreover, the educational newsletter that the project intended to distribute at the school board meeting also did not occur. Project staff were redirected to conduct contact tracing and other pandemic-related duties, and the project director left the program. Efforts to contact policymakers—the Colusa County Board of Supervisors, and Colusa and Williams City Councils—to follow-up and/or conduct key informant interviews (as mentioned above) were unsuccessful. Coalition meetings were initially cancelled then pivoted to virtual meetings, community events were cancelled, businesses shut down, and remote work for most employees began. For the next year and a half, the project was unable to make any progress.

Trying to move forward

In the August/September 2021, the project's fourth and final year, staff met with key community leaders in the cities of Colusa and Williams to conduct key informant interviews. The purpose of the interviews was to explore key community leader views on smoking and tobacco use, and prohibiting the sale and distribution of flavored tobacco products as part of the project's End Commercial Tobacco Campaign, which would begin in January 2022. Policymakers were not selected for this round of interviews as the project expected to conduct interviews with them in Spring 2022 and did not want to cause interview fatigue. For that reason, the project chose influential community members with whom to speak during this round. Educational materials were provided to each informant, which were highlighted during the discussion. These materials included the results from the 2019 Healthy Stores campaign to show that flavored tobacco products were readily available in local stores, information from the CTCP regarding the dangers of flavored tobacco products, the 2017-2018 California Student Tobacco Survey results, and the Partners for Health newsletter.

CCTEP found that of the five purposively selected informants in Colusa and Williams, all were in support of a ban on the sale and distribution of flavored tobacco products. Informants believed there was also some awareness in the community about the issues related to flavored tobacco products and youth, but among specific groups, e.g., parents, grandparents, and community-based organizations that worked with youth. Only one informant confidently indicated that there was support among the Williams City Council; other informants were not sure. This information indicated that more policymaker and community education would have to take place. Moreover,

based on suggestions by the informants, the project will also have to find local youth who can speak personally about their own experience with flavored tobacco products, which informants believed would be more compelling to local lawmakers, a suggestion that will be incorporated into the project's ECTC work.

Using media

Throughout the 2017–2021 work plan, CCTEP conducted paid, social, and earned media activities and, overall, media efforts were successful in generating positive coverage about tobacco control issues in Colusa County media, generating over 500,000 impressions to local residents. Program staff utilized paid media in the form of Facebook ads and ads on radio (English and Spanish), billboards and social media (Facebook) using the "Nicotine Equals" and "Influencia Del Internet" campaigns. Project staff also make about 50 posts to the Facebook page per year on the topics of flavored tobacco products and youth vaping.

In terms of earned media, there were a number of stories detected during the 2017–2021 work plan that were a result of four articles and/or press releases written by project staff and/or coalition members regarding flavored tobacco products, teen vaping, tobacco marketing toward youth, and HSHC efforts (coordinated with Yuba and Sutter tobacco control programs) that were distributed through the local print newspapers. As a result of the press releases and articles written, 13 tobaccorelated media pieces were found in local newspapers (three in year two, eight in year three, and two in year four) with a potential of over 500,000 impressions.

In year three of the project's work plan, due to changes brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2019 Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community Store Observation Survey data was not released in a statewide event as originally planned. Instead, the data was publicly released via the refreshed HSHC website in June 2020. Project staff also submitted a press release, referenced above, in October 2020, which was printed the same day in two Colusa County news outlets, the *Colusa County Sun Herald* and the *Williams Pioneer Review*.

Sharing results

Key findings were shared to audiences throughout the 2017–2021 work plan in the form of presentations, fact sheets in educational outreach kits, press releases, social media posts, newsletters, et cetera, including the TES members, public health leadership, and health and human services partners. The project also posted highlights of the effort on the CCTEP webpage. This report will be shared with these same audiences.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CCTEP's objective was not met: a policy was not adopted. The COVID-19 pandemic interrupted the project's ability to educate policymakers and share data regarding the illegal sales rate, prevalence of flavored tobacco products in stores, and public support for a flavored tobacco products ban. To date, none of the three jurisdictions in Colusa County (the City of Colusa, the City of Williams or the County of Colusa) have adopted a ban on the sale of mentholated and other flavored tobacco products. While there were data available from the YATPS, the illegal sales rate was low and the number of retailers in the county is small. Although the low buy rate was not compelling to lawmakers, continuing to monitor illegal sales rates through the YATPS may be necessary to convince policymakers of the need for regulating the retail environment.

Given the conservative political climate, the project would have benefited from having the support of law enforcement. Providing data on a comparable jurisdiction that has adopted a ban on flavored tobacco products when approaching the Board of Supervisors, or the Colusa or Williams city councils, as well as more public support through larger sample sizes, may also be necessary to convince policymakers. Future effort should also include personal testimony by local youth.

The HSHC statewide data collection provided valuable local information in terms of public opinion, store observations, opinions of a couple of policymakers, and media activity. The workload is considerable for a program with only two staff members. Future work should include building the program's capacity by engaging the tobacco coalition members and/or by establishing subcontracts with community-based organizations to alleviate the workload created by these important statewide data collection processes.

Community education and outreach activities—making presentations, creating fact sheets—do seem to have made an impact in building support for regulating the retail environment among the public and community-based organizations. Future work should include gathering letters of support and/or endorsements from the community, as well as regular merchant education.

Use of paid advertisements guaranteed publication in print media. Going forward, CCTEP will need to do a combination of building its newsletter mailing list, using paid media, events and educational presentations as part of its community education arsenal. The American Lung Association (ALA) Report Card could also be leveraged going forward, since the ALA has a positive reputation and credibility across the state.

The conservative political climate made progress difficult, but not impossible. Based on what worked well in this project, CCTEP will continue to try to involve youth in project activities, and will focus on public outreach to make both the public and policymakers aware of how to limit exposure to pro-tobacco influences and keep tobacco products out of the hands of youth.

For the 2022–2025 scope of work, CCTEP will continue to work on banning the sales of flavored tobacco products in the county.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

EDUCATION/PARTICIPANT SURVEY

Colusa County Flavored Tobacco Presentation-Feedback Form

1. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have gained a basic understanding of the different types of flavored tobacco products					
I have learned the rates of youth that start tobacco use with a flavored product and currently use flavored tobacco products					
I have gained a basic understanding of why flavored tobacco products are appealing to youth					
I have learned about the ways flavored tobacco products are marketed toward young people and how this could impact youth in Colusa County					
I have gained a basic understanding of some of the negative health consequences of flavored tobacco products					

2. What was the most important thing you learned in this presentation?

3. What was the least clear in the presentation for you?

APPENDIX B

EDUCATION/PARTICIPANT SURVEY **PHOTOVOICE**

March 16, 2018

EVALUATION FORM

Advisors and facilitators for the Youth Coalition need your advice! The Youth Coalition is committed to increasing young people's understanding of tobacco and empower them to make decisions. We want to improve our workshops, and you can help. Will you please take a few moments to complete this evaluation form?

Workshop Objectives

Please share with us your response to the workshop objectives. Please check (\checkmark) how well each objective fits you Now and Before you took the Workshop.

		Now			BE	Before Workshop			
As a result of this Workshop.	Not at all	A Little	Pretty Much	Very Much	Not at all	A Little	Pretty Much	Very Much	
a) I know what a Photovoice is.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
b) I think Photovoice can be an effective communication tool.		2	3	4		2	3	4	
c) I understand how to safely take pictures for the Photovoice project.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
d) I am ready to create change in Colusa County by utilizing Photovoice.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
e) I am able to confidently begin and complete a Photovoice project.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	

Workshop Activities

We want to know how effective you think the workshop activities were to achieve the objectives of the Training. Please check (\checkmark) how effective you thought each of the activities were.

	Not Effective	Somewhat Effective	Fairly Effective	Very Effective
Community Mapping	1	2	3	4
Photovoice Training Presentation	1	2	3	4
Photovoice Handout	1	2	3	4

COMMENTS:

1. What did you like most about the Training?

2. What suggestions do you have for us to improve the Training?

3. Do you have any unanswered questions from this Training?

4. Other comments:

APPENDIX C

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Informational Interview Questions Flavored Tobacco Products & Tobacco Marketing Towards Youth Spring 2018

- 1. Do you consider the use of tobacco in your community to be an issue? Why or why not?
- 2. The popularity of flavored tobacco products such as little cigars/cigarillos and vape pens/ecigarettes has skyrocketed among youth in recent years. These tobacco & nicotine products can come in many flavors such as cherry crush, watermelon and Piña Colada. These products are packed in bright colors and some even smell like candy. Why do you think these products have become so popular in the last decade?
- 3. What is your opinion of flavored tobacco products such as electronic smoking devices?
- 4. What is your opinion of flavored tobacco products such as menthol cigarettes?
- 5. The predatory marketing of tobacco to children is not new or surprising information. Big Tobacco's own documents and public research remind us that Big Tobacco exists only if it can recruit new nicotine addicts. Based on this information do you feel like the marketing of tobacco products and specifically flavored products is a threat to youth in your community? Why or why not? If so, where are the largest threats?
- 6. In your opinion, how easily accessible are flavored tobacco and electronic smoking devices for youth and young adults in your community?
- 7. In 2016, the California Department of Public Health conducted the Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community (HSHC) Survey. This survey involved health agencies across the state surveying local stores for the availability of fruits, veggies, tobacco, and alcohol.

This 2016 survey found that over 73% of Colusa County stores sold flavored tobacco products (Swisher Sweets) for less than \$1.00. These products are often easily available on the counters at retailers and come in bright colors and fun familiar flavors like gummy bear and peach. What are your thoughts on ways these deadly products could be better managed so that they do not fall into the hands of youth?

- 8. In the 2016 HSHC survey, almost 86 % of all Colusa County tobacco retailers sold flavored products. Can you think of any barriers that the Colusa County might face in trying to move forward with a policy to restrict the sales of flavored tobacco products?
 - a. How do you think the barriers could be overcome?
 - b. Would you support a policy on regulating the sales of flavored tobacco products? Why or why not?
- 9. Our tobacco coalition recently merged with Colusa County Partners for Health, which serves as a united voice to support the health and well-being of Colusa County. Can you think of anyone that might be interested in joining the efforts of Colusa County Partners for Health to reduce youth and young adult access to tobacco products and help create a healthier community?

APPENDIX D

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS Flavored Tobacco Products Ban INSTRUMENT

Interview Conducted:
_Position/Title:
_Months/Years with Org.:
_Email:
Duration of Interview:

Protocol: Make arrangements in advance, if possible, to ensure you have some focused time. Introduce yourself. Explain why you're there, define why this informant was sought out, how information will be used, and request permission to record for note-taking purposes or – if not recording – inform person that you will be taking/typing notes. Assure the informant that contact information will not be shared with solicitors and that all responses will be anonymous.

Sample Introduction

"Hello, my name is ______. I am with the Colusa County Health & Human Services Agency. Thank you for agreeing to talk with me. I am gathering information from tobacco retailers in the county regarding menthol cigarettes and other flavored tobacco products. There are no right or wrong answers. We want to find out your experiences and value your opinion on the subject. [Your responses will be combined with others and shared as a whole, with individual identifying information held confidential.]

1. I see you carry several different types of tobacco products. Which product do you sell the most? What would be second in the order of sales volume? And third? Fourth? And Last?

- 1.1. Cigarettes:
- 1.2. Cigarillos:
- 1.3. Cigars:
- 1.4. Chew:
- 1.5. Electronic Cigarettes:
- 1.6. Other
- 2. How big of a part of your business is the sale of flavored products? Are there any specific kinds of flavors that sell more than others, e.g., menthol cigarettes vs. wintergreen chew? [Probe: Who tends to buy these products?]
- 3. Thinking about your monthly store income, what percent of your store's monthly sales would you say comes from tobacco products? What about menthol cigarettes and other flavored tobacco products?

- 4. Tobacco sales contracts typically have requirements e.g., placement of products in the store. Does your sales contract have requirements? [Probe: For pricing? Display of products? Location of products in the store?] What happens if you comply or don't comply with these requirements?
- 5. How would you feel about a county/city policy that prohibits the sale and distribution of menthol cigarettes and other flavored tobacco products? Would you say that you...

O Strongly Support O Somewhat Support O Somewhat Oppose, or O Strongly Oppose this policy? [Probe: Why or why not?]

- 6. If the informant is not initially supportive of any such policy or is tentative, ask: Are there any conditions under which you would support a policy that prohibits the sale and distribution of menthol cigarettes and other flavored tobacco products in the county? [i.e., what might convince you?]
- 7. Based on how they respond to this point, you may need to ask: What is the next step in the process of considering a policy? Or, is there anyone else you think I should talk to?

That concludes my questions. Thank you taking the time to talk with me and for sharing your opinions. [Explain how talking with them was helpful and what you learned from them]. Do you have any questions for me? Make sure you define next steps, if appropriate.

APPENDIX E

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS Flavored Tobacco Products Ban INSTRUMENT

Date of Interview:	Interview Conducted:
Key Informant Name:	Position/Title/Role:
Key Informant Organization:	Months/Years with Org.:
Phone:	Email:
Interview Start Time:	Duration of Interview:

Getting ready. Be sure to schedule an interview in advance. Do <u>not</u> provide the interview questions in advance of the interview or have the informant complete this instrument. Gathering information from/engaging informants is intended to be conducted as a discussion, not as a survey form to be completed. In advance of the interview, it's also important that you familiarize yourself with probing techniques, such as "Can you say more about that?" or "Tell me more" or "I'm not sure I understand, could you explain that again?" to encourage the informant to talk and be more specific.

Interview Protocol: Introduce yourself. Explain/summarize the purpose of the interview, why this informant was sought out, how information will be used, and request permission to record for note-taking purposes or – if not recording – inform person that you will be taking/typing notes. Assure the informant that contact information will not be shared with solicitors and that all responses will be anonymous.

Sample Introduction

"Hello, my name is ______. I am with Colusa County Public Health. Thank you for agreeing to meet with me. I am talking with a variety of decision influencers and thought leaders in the city of [Colusa or Williams] like yourself about flavored tobacco products, including menthol cigarettes and flavored e-cigarettes. We value your opinion on this issue and want to get your opinion about a flavored tobacco products ban in the city of [Colusa or Williams]. Just so you know, your responses will be combined with others and shared as a whole, with individual identifying information held confidential.

- 1. Do you have any <u>concerns</u> about the use of flavored tobacco among youth or other population groups in the city of [Colusa or Williams]? If so, please explain.
- 2. What is your <u>opinion</u> on banning the sale of flavored tobacco products, including flavored ecigarettes? [Probe as necessary: Would you be in support of banning the sale of flavored tobacco products or opposed? Please explain.]
- 3. Do you think there is <u>community support</u> for a flavored tobacco products ban? [If yes, probe: among which communities or which people?] What could we do to increase support?

- 4. Do you think there is <u>support</u> for a flavored tobacco products ban among the [Colusa or Williams] City Council? [Probe: With individual policymakers? If so, who are they?] How could we increase support among the city council members? What could we do?
- 5. Can you suggest other key leaders or community members that are likely to be influential on this issue? [Probe: Would they be likely supporters or champions of efforts to pass a policy or likely oppose it?] Who else needs to be involved in this issue?
- 6. Is there any <u>information</u> that would be compelling to community leaders and/or policymakers in order to consider a flavored tobacco products ban [Probe: If so, what kind of information?]
- 7. What would be needed in the <u>tobacco retail environment</u> to eliminate flavored tobacco products? How do you think we could help retailers make a transition? What steps would we have to take? [Probe: Incentives? Different products? What kinds of products could retailers sell that would attract customers? Who would be interested in those products?]
- 8. What other <u>challenges or barriers</u> might there be in adopting and implementing a policy that prohibits the sale of flavored tobacco products in the city of [Colusa or Williams]? [Probe: How do you think they could be overcome?]

Just one more question

9. Would you be willing to play a role in getting a flavors ban passed in the city of [Colusa or Williams] and, if so, <u>how would you like to be involved going forward</u>?

That concludes my questions. Thank you for sharing your insights. [Explain how talking with them was helpful and what you learned from them]. Do you have any questions for me?

APPENDIX F

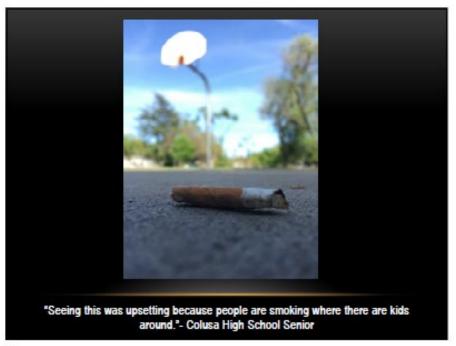
Through Our Eyes...







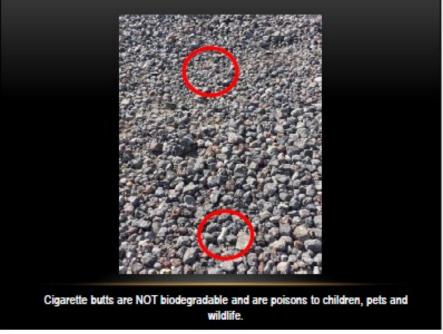






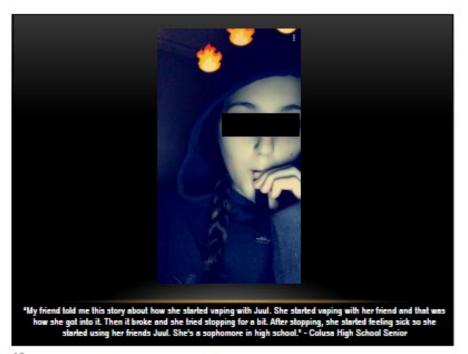








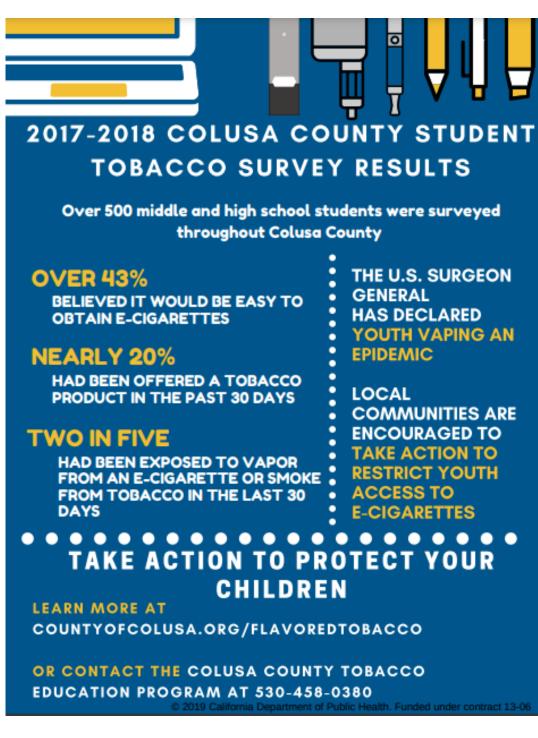






APPENDIX G

CALIFORNIA STUDENT TOBACCO SURVEY FACT SHEET – ENGLISH



CALIFORNIA STUDENT TOBACCO SURVEY FACT SHEET - SPANISH

