



Department of Health  
Agency of Human Services



## Survey Supports Healthier Retail Environments at Vermont Convenience Stores

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BURLINGTON – A **survey** of nearly 2,500 Vermonters shows that a clear majority support creating healthier retail environments that promote healthy snacks, offer more fresh fruit and vegetables, and curtail tobacco and alcohol advertising.

Sixty percent of people surveyed at 130 stores said they would buy fresh fruits and vegetables if they were available and of good quality, and 83 percent believe young people are influenced by tobacco and alcohol advertising that should be either limited or not allowed.

The survey was conducted between July 2011 and March 2012. A total of 29 community coalitions funded by the Health Department collected information for the survey.

Started in 2010, the 'Healthy Retailers' initiative recruits owners and managers of independently-owned groceries and convenience stores to work together with community groups to create places where healthy choices are more visible and easier to make, with the goal of reducing the prevalence of chronic health conditions such as obesity.

"Healthy Retailers is a collaborative effort by both the community coalitions and the store owners," said Health Commissioner Harry Chen, MD. "More than 50 stores are making small changes that can have a big and lasting impact on the overall health of a community".

Examples of positive changes include raising the height of alcohol and tobacco signage so that it's at the eye level of adults, not kids; displaying water and low calorie beverages more prominently; making sure that soda pop-like alcoholic beverages are not displayed near drinks for youth; and recognizing that some customers are looking for local, healthier food options.

Key findings from the survey:

- 85% of respondents shop at convenience stores
- 24% buy regular groceries in convenience stores, and over half purchased milk
- Location is the primary reason people shop at convenience stores (69%). Large grocery stores are often a longer distance away for many people in rural communities
- 76% said store owners should decrease the number of alcohol ads, and 80% said they should decrease the number of tobacco ads
- 84% said outdoor ads for tobacco or alcohol should not be allowed at all

For more information on the Healthy Retailers initiative and the survey results, go to the Health Department's website at [healthvermont.gov](http://healthvermont.gov) and visit "**Healthy Retailers**" on the home page.

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