

# This is Tobacco Marketing: Media Campaign

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is the purpose of this media campaign?

The purpose of this media campaign is to educate Massachusetts residents about tobacco industry influence in retail stores, and the effect that it has on Massachusetts' young people.

### 2. Why are you talking about tobacco influence in stores, rather than other “more important” issues?

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable deaths in the nation. Every year tobacco kills more Americans than AIDS, cocaine, heroin, alcohol, vehicular accidents, homicide and suicide combined, and it costs Massachusetts taxpayers more than \$4 billion in healthcare costs.<sup>3,4</sup> Despite previous successes such as Massachusetts' statewide Smoke-free Workplace Law, and the continued decline in youth cigarette smoking rates, it is clear that more needs to be done to prevent youth from becoming addicted to nicotine. Retail stores are the main channel of communication for a tobacco industry that spends more money marketing their products than the junk food, soda and alcohol industries combined. 75% of teens shop in convenience stores at least once per week<sup>1</sup>, and research shows that exposure to tobacco marketing is a primary cause of youth smoking.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. Why should I care about tobacco industry influence in stores?

Most adult smokers become addicted before they graduate from high school: 90% of them start before the age of 18.<sup>2</sup> Research shows that tobacco targeting of youth in stores is a primary cause of youth smoking. Exposure to ads and product displays has been shown to make youth more likely to start smoking. The more tobacco marketing kids see, the more likely they are to smoke. Research shows that kids who shop at stores with a tobacco presence two or more times a week are 64% more likely to start smoking than their peers who don't.<sup>2</sup> Recently, tobacco companies have begun using the same tactics to target youth with e-cigarette products, including e-hookahs and vape pens, to youth.

### 4. How are young people targeted by the tobacco industry in stores?

Tobacco companies target young people through posters and signs inside and outside stores and by using colorful, well-lit displays of tobacco products behind the counter in most convenience stores, gas stations, pharmacies and grocery stores. The Tobacco industry uses three specific tactics to hook kids on tobacco: price, packaging, and availability. The Tobacco industry sells products in colorful and fun packaging that attracts young people and prices these products cheaply to encourage impulse buys. These cheap tobacco products are available to young people in a variety of locations.

### 5. How big is this tobacco business?

The tobacco companies spend more than \$8.5 billion annually to market their products to current and potential customers in the United States. That translates to about \$370,000 every single day.<sup>4</sup> The tobacco industry spends an estimated \$135 million a year in Massachusetts alone.

### 6. How much control does the tobacco industry really have inside privately owned stores?

The tobacco companies pay retailers – including giving them free shelving, racks and cabinets – to put tobacco products in the most visible locations in stores. Many retailers sign contracts with tobacco companies, whose sales reps measure, inch-by-inch, the shelving area that retailers are required to use for displaying tobacco products. Industry representatives

<sup>1</sup> Feighery et al. The 1999 Annual Report of the Promotion Industry, a PROMO Magazine Special Report.

<sup>2</sup> Henriksen, Schleicher, Feighery and Fortmann. Pediatrics: The Official Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics. July 19, 2010, DOI: 10.1542/peds.2009 3021

<sup>3</sup> American Lung Association. <http://www.lung.org/associations/states/colorado/tobacco/>



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work in our community each day to make sure that stores adhere strictly to the contract at all times. As a result, many Massachusetts retailers have become ensnared in a contractual web where they are stuck doing the tobacco industry's dirty work.

## 7. Isn't the FDA doing something about this already?

The federal Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act (FSPTCA) specifically grants states and municipalities the authority to regulate the time, place and manner of tobacco advertising and promotions. This means that states and municipalities have the power to protect our kids from tobacco industry tactics in stores.

## 8. Hasn't the anti-tobacco campaign succeeded now that smoking is banned in bars, restaurants, and other workplaces in Massachusetts?

While clean indoor air has made Massachusetts a much healthier place to live, work and play, each day an unacceptable number of teens light their first cigarette and face a lifetime of addiction. According to the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, each year 4,700 new youth begin smoking in Massachusetts alone.<sup>3</sup>

## 9. What is MakeSmokingHistory.org?

MakeSmokingHistory.org is a website created by the Massachusetts Tobacco Cessation and Prevention program (MTCP) at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. This website offers the latest information on tobacco prevention and cessation resources for the Commonwealth.

## 10. What are the Community Partnerships?

The Tobacco-Free Community Partnerships (TFCPs) are funded by MTCP to support communities' efforts to help people quit using tobacco, prevent youth from starting, and protect everyone from secondhand smoke. Each TFCP is part of a statewide network of programs that work to enhance state and local tobacco control efforts, mobilize support for community change, and highlight work being done in the community to support tobacco free living. They also serve as a resource for local coalitions, health and human service agencies, municipalities, and workplaces on state and local tobacco intervention efforts.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/facts\\_issues/toll\\_us/massachusetts](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/facts_issues/toll_us/massachusetts)

