



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**News Release**

**LINDA LINGLE**  
GOVERNOR

---

CHIYOME LEINAALA FUKINO, M.D.  
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH  
Phone: (808) 586-4410  
Fax: (808) 586-4444

---

For Immediate Release: August 3, 2005

05-52

**HAWAII TOBACCO SALES TO MINORS AMONG LOWEST IN THE NATION**

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division (ADAD) survey results show tobacco sales to minors in Hawaii continue to be low across the State and among the lowest in the nation. Hawaii ranks fourth among the most successful states in controlling tobacco sales to minors, with only Delaware, Mississippi and Iowa producing better results. The survey is a joint effort between the DOH and the University of Hawaii’s Cancer Research Center of Hawaii to monitor the State’s compliance with the Synar Regulations of the federal Public Health Services Act of 1993.

“The results of this 10<sup>th</sup> annual survey show the success of the Department’s efforts to educate local merchants about illegal tobacco sales to our youth,” Health Director Chiyome Fukino, M.D. said. “We have watched the rates of noncompliance drop dramatically from 44.5% in 1996 at the start of the program to 5.5% in 2005. This is a critical component to our overall efforts to reduce tobacco use among our youth.”

“It’s very encouraging that merchants are doing their part to help control tobacco use among teens,” said Lt. Governor Aiona. “Most smokers started their addictive habit when they were teenagers, so it’s important that we work together as a community to educate our youth about

(more)

the dangers of tobacco use before they begin smoking. The message to our teens is smoking doesn't make you 'cool', but it does put your health at risk."

In the spring of 2005, teams made up of youth volunteers (ages 15-17) and adult observers visited a random sample of 217 stores statewide in which the youth attempted to buy cigarettes to determine how well retailers were complying with State tobacco laws. Twelve stores (5.5%) sold to minors (ages 15-17) **without identification**.

The significant factors associated with purchase of tobacco during 2005 annual inspections were:

- 1) Whether the clerk requested identification – 61% of clerks who did not ask the minor for identification sold tobacco to minors.
- 2) Whether the clerk requested identification or age – 83% of clerks who did not ask for age or identification sold tobacco to minors.
- 3) Proper warning sign – Stores without proper warning signs for the sale of tobacco to minors had significantly higher sales.

Hawaii State Law prohibits tobacco sales to persons under the age of 18. Merchants convicted of selling to minors face a mandatory fine of \$500.

###

For more information contact:  
Keith Yamamoto  
Department of Health  
Alcohol & Drug Abuse Prevention Division  
Phone: (808) 692-7506

Janice Okubo  
Department of Health  
Public Information Officer  
Phone: (808) 586-4442