

# CANDY-FLAVORED TOBACCO IS A TRICK, NOT A TREAT—AND IT'S FOR SALE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

SMOKEFREE  
Oregon

Every day, tobacco companies market their addictive products to Oregon kids and teens by making them look, smell and taste like candy. Tobacco companies are so adept at this targeted trickery, many adults don't even notice it.



For all of us who care about Oregon and the ways that our communities help, or harm, our health, it's time to take a closer look.

- A wide array of tobacco products, easily accessible to kids and teens today, are packaged and flavored to be nearly indistinguishable from candy.
- These flavored vape or inhalent devices, little cigars, cigarillos and hookah tobacco are dressed up in shiny, brightly-colored wrappers and tins.
- They are **sweetened with the same chemicals** used to flavor products popular with kids, like LifeSavers® and Kool-Aid®.
- Despite fruity and kid-friendly names like grape, chocolate, “vivid vanilla” and “cherry crush,” these products contain nicotine and are as addictive as cigarettes.

Tobacco companies say they add sweet and fruity flavors to tobacco because grownups like sweet stuff, too. Yet Oregon kids are far more likely than adults to use flavored tobacco.

Among youth tobacco users, more than half (57%) of 8th graders and nearly two-thirds (65%) of 11th graders used flavored tobacco, according to the **2017 Oregon Healthy Teens survey**.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, about 26 percent of adult tobacco users in Oregon use flavored tobacco products according to the most recent survey.<sup>2</sup>

Clearly, tobacco companies' targeted marketing to young people is working. Their tactics are on display in the gas stations, convenience stores and other retailers where most tobacco is sold in Oregon. **Young people visit these stores often**: More than half of 8th graders (59%) and 11th graders (56%) in Oregon shop in a convenience store at least once a week.<sup>3</sup>

Over the past few years, public health workers and community members in every Oregon county coordinated visits to stores that sell tobacco and documented that nearly all of them—nine in ten—**sell flavored tobacco products** (when menthol cigarettes are included, that percentage climbs to 98 percent).



## STOPPING TOBACCO COMPANIES FROM SELLING TO YOUTH

Some communities in Oregon and across the country are using Tobacco Retail Licensure to stop this kind of marketing and prevent youth tobacco use. Tobacco Retail Licensure requires businesses to have an annual license to sell tobacco and other nicotine products, including electronic cigarettes.

<sup>1</sup>Oregon Health Authority. Oregon Healthy Teens. 2017. [https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/DISEASESCONDITIONS/CHRONICDISEASE/DATAREPORTS/Documents/datatables/ORAnnualOHT\\_Tobacco.pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/DISEASESCONDITIONS/CHRONICDISEASE/DATAREPORTS/Documents/datatables/ORAnnualOHT_Tobacco.pdf) | <sup>2</sup>Oregon Health Authority. Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. 2016. [https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/DISEASESCONDITIONS/CHRONICDISEASE/DATAREPORTS/Documents/datatables/ORAnnualBRFSS\\_tobacco.pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/DISEASESCONDITIONS/CHRONICDISEASE/DATAREPORTS/Documents/datatables/ORAnnualBRFSS_tobacco.pdf) | <sup>3</sup>Oregon Health Authority. Oregon Healthy Teens. 2017. [https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/DISEASESCONDITIONS/CHRONICDISEASE/DATAREPORTS/Documents/datatables/ORAnnualOHT\\_Tobacco.pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/DISEASESCONDITIONS/CHRONICDISEASE/DATAREPORTS/Documents/datatables/ORAnnualOHT_Tobacco.pdf)

Oregon is one of only nine states in the country that have not adopted Tobacco Retail Licensure.<sup>4</sup> As a result, counties like Multnomah and others have taken the initiative to pass it themselves to protect their youth.

Multnomah County is using its Tobacco Retail Licensure to know where tobacco products are being sold so they can educate retailers, make sure they follow the laws, and enforce penalties if tobacco is sold to persons under age 21.

In counties that don't have Tobacco Retail Licensure, only a random sample of retailers are inspected each year. Many can go one or more years without a check to see if they are following the law not to sell tobacco to persons under age 21. Among tobacco retailers that were inspected in the first six months of 2018, 18% sold tobacco illegally to an underage buyer.<sup>5</sup> That's nearly one in five retailers.

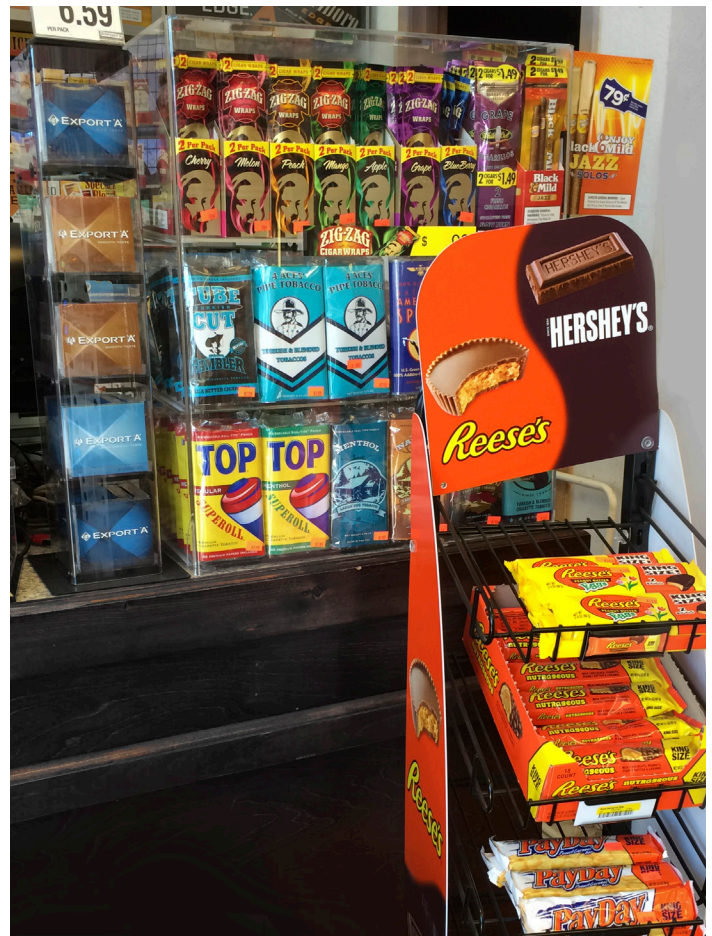
Across the country, states, counties and cities are also thinking about other ways Tobacco Retail Licensure can help reduce tobacco's impact. For example, communities have created "no tobacco sales zones" around schools, limited promotions like price discounts and prohibited tobacco sales at pharmacies.

These retail strategies are the next generation of policies to keep youth from smoking and help people quit.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Notice what's for sale in our communities, talk with the young people in your life about what you find, and share photos on social media to [#whatsforsale](#).
- Connect with the Oregon Tobacco Prevention and Education Program (TPEP) coordinators in your **counties and tribes** to meet others who care about these issues and are working to make our communities healthier.

Tobacco use remains the number-one cause of preventable death and disease in Oregon, killing nearly 8,000 people each year.<sup>6</sup> We can help young Oregonians avoid a lifetime of addiction and build a healthier state—by refusing to fall for the sweet tricks of the tobacco companies.



*An Oregon retailer sells flavored little cigars next to candy.*

<sup>4</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). "State Tobacco Activities Tracking and Evaluation (STATE) System." July 11, 2018. <https://www.cdc.gov/STATESystem/>. | <sup>5</sup>2017-18 Oregon Tobacco Retail Enforcement Inspection Reports. <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/PreventionWellness/TobaccoPrevention/Documents/InspectionCoReport.PDF> |

<sup>6</sup>Oregon Tobacco Facts 2018, <https://apps.state.or.us/Forms/Served/Ie9139.pdf>