



K A N S A S

GARY DANIELS, ACTING SECRETARY

SOCIAL AND REHABILITATION SERVICES

KATHLEEN SEBELIUS, GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Gary Daniels, Secretary

For immediate release:
November 16, 2005

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KANSAS BACK IN COMPLIANCE: FEWER RETAILERS SELLING TOBACCO TO MINORS

Topeka- Governor Kathleen Sebelius announced today that Kansas is once again in compliance with federal requirements regarding the sale of tobacco to minors.

"A healthier Kansas is one of the top priorities of my administration," said Governor Sebelius. "There is no better way to prevent future health problems such as cardiovascular disease and cancer than to keep young people from starting to smoke or chew tobacco in the first place."

The Kansas Department of Revenue Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) works with the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) to conduct random, unannounced inspections of tobacco retailers. Over the past 12 months, 562 tobacco retailer outlets across the state were checked to determine the state's compliance rate. Of those inspected, 80.8% did not sell to minors. At 19.2%, the non-compliance rate is down from 38% in 2004. The federal Synar Amendment requires states to maintain a compliance rate of 80% or better.

Coalitions and organizations at both the state and local level have worked together over the last several months in a concentrated effort to educate retailers on the consequences of selling tobacco to minors. A campaign entitled "It's Everybody's Business" was launched to provide retailers with free resources to educate their employees about Kansas law regarding tobacco sales to minors. In addition, prevention specialists conducted onsite training programs for retail clerks and managers and print materials were provided to retailers to help deter illegal purchasing attempts. SRS, Kansas Regional Prevention Centers, The Kansas Department of Health and Environment/Tobacco Use Prevention Program, ABC, Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition and Kansas Family Partnership were all a part of this important effort.

"This is a perfect example of how a public/private partnership can work," said SRS Secretary Gary Daniels. I applaud the retailers' commitment and encourage them to continue this strong effort in preventing the sale of tobacco to minors."

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Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of death and disease in Kansas. Every year, nearly 4,000 Kansans die from diseases that are directly linked to tobacco usage. Tobacco-related illnesses in Kansas are responsible for more than \$720 million in medical expenditures each year. According to the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, Kansas spends \$180 million in Medicaid costs to treat tobacco-related illnesses and more than \$800 million in lost productivity costs are directly related to tobacco use in Kansas each year.

Tobacco users typically start smoking in early adolescence. Almost all first time use occurs prior to high school graduation. Currently 29% of high school students report using at least one form of tobacco, according to the Kansas Youth Tobacco Survey. This includes cigarettes, spit or smokeless tobacco, cigars, pipes, and other forms of novel smoked tobacco. Cigarette smoking is reported by 21% of high school students. An estimated 550 Kansas youth become regular smokers each month.

For help to quit smoking, call the Kansas Tobacco Quitline at 1-866-KAN-STOP (1-866-526-7867).

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