

Reward & Reminder goes statewide

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Press Release

Every county in Kansas to start Reward and Reminder™ program to reduce illegal tobacco access to young people...

Topeka, June 28, 2006: All 105 Kansas counties are now scheduled to be visited by teams of youth and adults to reward Kansas tobacco retailers and clerks for doing the right thing, by not selling tobacco to minors. "The Reward and Reminder program is a scientifically proven strategy that reduces illegal sales of tobacco to youth," said Mary Jayne Hellebust, director, Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition. "And, it will ensure that millions of dollars continue to be available to prevent and treat addictions in Kansas," Hellebust added.

Starting on July 1, 2006, all Kansas Regional Prevention Centers will be dramatically expanding teams to visit every Kansas tobacco retailer. Teams of youth, with parental permission, enter stores and try to buy tobacco products. If the clerk checks I.D. and refuses to sell to the underage youth, the clerk and the store get a reward, such as gift certificates or movie tickets. Stores and clerks also receive public recognition for doing the right thing.

Stores or clerks who might sell to the underage youth receive a reminder card, and are likely to be visited in the future to assure compliance with Kansas law, which was enacted to keep tobacco from anyone under age 18. Kelly Peak, SRS Interim Director of Prevention Services said, "Reducing youth access to tobacco is one of the key ways of reducing not only the serious health risks from tobacco, but also youth involvement with alcohol and other drugs. It's everybody's business to help, and Reward and Reminder allows every Kansas citizen and youth to thank and recognize Kansas retailers and clerks for doing the right thing."

Story ideas...

1. Go to www.itseverybodysbusiness.org. Watch the news story and do your own "ride along" with local regional prevention specialists and youth to see Reward and Reminder in action. See list of local contacts on enclosed Media Alert.
2. Interview and publicize some clerks and merchants who do the right thing by not selling tobacco to minors.
3. Write a story about the use of youth, Internet technology (we are using Palm devices and postings on each county at www.itseverybodysbusiness.org to show what each county is doing). Contact Miriam Willmann at PAXIS Institute, who runs the PAXIS Reward and Reminder program and maintains the data systems, (608) 848-3058.
4. Do stories on updates for your community or county about results.

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