Evaluation of a Retailer Education Campaign

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BACKGROUND

Rate of Tobacco Sales to Minors in NC
- 10.3% sales rate in 2006
- Steady decrease from 50% in 19961
- 92 Synar Amendment: states must reduce rate to ≤ 20%2
- NC has met goal overall, but some counties still have rates > 25%3

Identifying Minors
2000: NC introduces colored borders for driver’s licenses
- red border = under 18
- yellow border = 18 to 20
- green border = 21 and over
2004: Only 4% of managers/owners correctly identify the colors on NC driver’s licenses in telephone survey.4

The Red Flag Campaign
- Retailer educational campaign about colored borders
- Sponsors: NC Division of Alcohol Law Enforcement, NC Division of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund
- Rolled out in 3 phases (beginning in 2005)
- Retailers sent packets with posters, brochures, stickers
- Campaign evaluated after Phase 1 and Phase 2
- Phase 2 evaluation (spring/summer 2006) reported here

METHODS (PHASE 2)
- Quasi-experimental pre-post test design
- 2 counties chosen:
  - Durham – Intervention County (received materials)
  - New Hanover – Comparison County (no campaign)
- Factors in county selection:
  - Reduced risk of exposure to campaign in Comparison
  - Comparable population as measured by census data

RESULTS

- Awareness of the colored borders by Intervention merchants increased by 21% (from 76% to 92%) following the Red Flag campaign
- 60% of Intervention merchants knew red border = no sale (twice the number as in Comparison)
- 67% of Intervention merchants vs. 14% Comparison merchants aware of Red Flag campaign
- 30% of Intervention stores vs. 0 Comparison stores displayed Red Flag campaign materials post-intervention

CONCLUSIONS

- Red Flag campaign successfully reached merchants in target market
- Use of colored borders did not change substantively after campaign
- Merchants reasons for using colored borders:
  - have adequate alternatives
  - colored borders do not always indicate correct age
- Merchants in intervention county are displaying RF materials
- We Card, other ID signs in almost all stores

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Incentives for managers to train employees
- Incorporate Red Flag into tobacco control grantee trainings
- Additional strategies to boost utilization:
  - Collaboration with store owners/managers
  - Collaboration with DMV for licenses to expire at 18 & 21
- Additional research with merchants and analysis of rates of tobacco sales to minors by Red Flag counties

LIMITATIONS

- Need analysis of sales rates to minors in these counties to examine whether color-coded borders, Red Flag affecting sales rates
- Need qualitative research with merchants to examine other factors that have an impact on sales to minors

REFERENCES

4. Unpublished study conducted by CapStrat in Raleigh, NC. December 2004