July 2023

Stanislaus County Tobacco Prevention Program

*Evaluation Report for Public Opinion Polls Conducted in City of Modesto, Spring 2023 (Evaluation Activity 1-E-4)*

Stanislaus County Tobacco Prevention Program (SCTPP)

Evaluation Report for Public Opinion Polls
Conducted in City of Modesto, Spring 2023
*(Evaluation Activity 1-E-4)*

***SCTPP Objective 1:*** *By June 30, 2025, City of Modesto will adopt and implement both 1) a policy that eliminates smoking (including burning or heating of tobacco and other plant products, natural or synthetic) in all outdoor recreational and non-recreational public places (including parks/beaches, sidewalks, dining, entryways, worksites, event sites, bike lanes/paths, alleys, and parking structures) without designated smoking areas or distances; and* *2) a policy eliminating the sale and/or distribution of any mentholated cigarettes and other flavored tobacco products, and paraphernalia (e.g., smokeless tobacco products, dissolvable tobacco products, flavored premium cigars such as little cigars, cigarillos, hookah tobacco, e-cigarettes, e-hookah, wrappers). The policy will not criminalize the purchase, use, or possession of tobacco products by individuals*.

**Introduction**

In Spring 2023, Stanislaus County Tobacco Prevention Program conducted public opinion polls with community members in the city of Modesto to better understand community knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of ending commercial tobacco to reduce the availability of tobacco for this type of policy change. This data was collected by Stanislaus County staff and collaborative agencies such as Stanislaus County Veterans Service Office, and StanWorks. This survey can provide baseline information before the policy’s adoption to help guide the policy campaign. The information will be shared with community decision makers to demonstrate community knowledge and support for the policy. The results will also be incorporated into educational packets to be distributed to key decision and policy makers as well as one-on-one educational presentations made to targeted community decision makers.

**Evaluation Activity Results**

The public opinion poll was conducted in the city of Modesto in spring 2023 during the day and reached 162 City of Modesto participants. Participation in the survey overall and to any specific item in the survey was voluntary. Therefore, survey items may not represent all participants. Also, summaries of percentages in the results below may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of those who completed a survey.

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| **Table 1. Participant Demographics** |  |  |
|  | Percent | Number |  |
| Female | 49% | 80 |  |
| Male | 38% | 62 |  |
| Age (years)1 |  |  |  |
|      Under 18 | 0% | 0 |  |
|  18-20 | 1.8% | 3 |  |
|    21-34  | 34% | 56 |  |
|      35-44 years  | 27% | 39 |  |
|      45 years or older  | 37% | 60 |  |
| Race/Ethnicity2  |  |  |  |
|      Hispanic/Latino | 40% | 70 |  |
|      Non-Hispanic, White | 25% | 34 |  |
|      Asian/Pacific Islander  | 5% | 11 |  |
|      African American/Black  | 5% | 9 |  |
|      American Indian/Alaskan Native  | 4% | 7 |  |
|      Prefer Not to Answer | 14% | 25 |  |
| Level of Education |  |  |  |
|      Less than HS diploma | 13% | 22 |  |
|      HS graduate or equivalent  | 22% | 37 |  |
|      Some college or associate degree | 25% | 43 |  |
|      Bachelor’s degree or higher  | 25% | 41 |  |

Table 2 describes participants’ use and experiences with tobacco products.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 2. Participant Tobacco Usage & Exposure** |  |  |
| **Personal Usage of Tobacco** | Percent | Number |  |
|         Regular tobacco user   | 13% | 22 |  |
|         Occasional tobacco user   | 6% | 11 |  |
|         Non- tobacco user (used but quit)  | 17% | 29 |  |
|         Non-tobacco user (never used) | 55% | 93 |  |
| Exposed to SHS in past two weeks  |  54% |  91 |  |

Table 3 shows participants’ support for the policy and issues related to the policy.

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| **Table 3. Attitudes Towards Eliminating sale of Tobacco Policy 1** |
|  | Percent | Number |  |
| **Policy Type Preference2** |  |  |  |
|         Eliminate sale of tobacco    | 46% | 72 |  |
|         Law that requires store owner to have local license to sell tobacco | 84% | 131 |  |
|         No sale of tobacco near schools | 91% | 141 |  |
|         No policy is needed | 14% | 22 |  |
|         Law to phase out sale of flavored tobacco products | 70% | 110 |  |
|  Believe products are harmful to peoples health  | 92% | 144 |  |
|  Believe drifting second hand smoke is a problem | 73% | 118 |  |
|  Believe parks and outdoor public spaces smoke free improve health of community | 78% | 121 |  |
|  Believe community has been negativity impacted by smoking, vaping and other tobacco  |  54% |  85 |  |
|  Believe fewer people would use tobacco if it was harder to purchase | 59% | 92 |  |
|  |
|  |

Table 4 describes potential barriers to the adoption of the policy reported by participants.

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| **Table 4. Potential Barriers to Policy Adoption, Spring 2023** |
|  | Percent | Number |
| Very easy to get tobacco products | 70% | 113 |
| Too many places selling tobacco products | 75% | 120 |
| City Council should take action  | 63% | 99 |

**Key Survey Findings**

1. ***Most participants in the survey have never used tobacco.***
2. ***The majority of participants believe that it is important to some kind of tobacco policies in place***
3. ***The majority of participants believe that a smoke free outdoor/indoor environment improves the health of the community***
4. ***Despite the support for a policy that eliminates sale of tobacco in the community there seems to be more support on regulation of tobacco use in specific areas is supported.***

**Summary and Recommendations**

The public opinion poll in the City of Modesto clarifies the community’s climate regarding the target policy. Information from the poll can help SCTPP tailor its policy strategies based on the readiness and support of the community members. Overall, the poll findings suggest that city of Modesto participants does not appear to be ready to support a complete ban on tobacco use everywhere but may limit where tobacco use may occur. A campaign to adopt such a policy should emphasize the findings from the survey which note that community members believe a tobacco-free community will improve health and quality of life on campus.