



Healthy Stores Healthy Valley: A Pilot Program to Reward Retailers for Offering Healthier Options Final Evaluation Report (2014-2017)

Santa Barbara County Public Health Department Tobacco Prevention Settlement Program

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Though the objective was not met, a pilot program was launched. Five, participating retailers made at least two changes such as improving the placement and availability of healthy foods and discontinuing the sale of electronic smoking devices.

Abstract

When observation surveys were conducted at licensed tobacco retailers in Santa Barbara County in 2013, it was evident that unhealthy products and advertisements for those products were ubiquitous. There were significantly less healthy advertisements and healthy products available in stores across the county. To increase visibility of healthy products, reduce ease of access and exposure to tobacco, alcohol, and unhealthy snacks and beverages, the Santa Barbara Tobacco Prevention Settlement Program decided to launch a pilot program in the 2014-2017 workplan to reward retailers who made healthy changes. The ultimate goal was policy adoption by at least one jurisdiction to implement a healthy retailer incentive program based on the lessons learned from the pilot program. The Santa Ynez Valley was chosen as the target for the pilot. Early in the program, a workgroup was established including members from the business community, messaging was tailored to the retailers, and a customer survey was conducted that showed that 85% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they prefer to shop at stores that promote healthy food and drinks. Stores were slow to participate, but, after frequent and regular store visits, five stores committed to making at least two changes to improve the retail environment. These changes were carefully designed to keep the vitality of the business in mind. Pre- and post-observation surveys showed stores offered fruit at checkout counters, moved water bottles to the front, made changes on the counter or at the 3ft level, and began to phase out the sale of electronic smoking devices. Informal interviews with owners showed stores participated for two primary reasons. First, many store owners and managers are aware of the increasing consumer demand for healthier and fresh food, and their food vendors are promoting a healthier and fresh line of food. Second, the stores received free advertising for participating. A policy was not adopted by the end of this workplan, but sufficient groundwork has been laid for future policy efforts. In addition, the program shows potential to be expanded to more stores throughout the county and a collaboration with a national food distributor will be explored.

Aim and Outcome

To create a healthier retail environment, the Santa Barbara County Tobacco Prevention Settlement Program (TPSP) chose the following objective for their 2014-17 workplan:

By June 30, 2017, at least one jurisdiction in Santa Barbara County, (i.e., the unincorporated areas of Santa Barbara County and/or the Cities of Buellton and Solvang) will amend their existing tobacco retail licensing policy and/or resolution to adopt a healthy retailer incentive program. The corresponding CX indicator is 1.2.8.

Though the objective was not met and a policy was not adopted, TPSP staff members successfully created and implemented a pilot program called, “Healthy Stores Healthy Valley” (HSHV), to reward neighborhood markets for offering healthier retail options. All five participating retailers adopted at least two healthier changes, and the most common type of change was the increase in the selection of healthy foods and fruit. Other changes included offering fruit at checkout counters, moving water bottles to the front of the store, and beginning to phase out the sale of electronic smoking devices (ESDs). The next steps might include expanding the program to more stores and communities, collaborating with a national food distributor, Core-Mark, and continuing to present the pilot program to elected officials who might be interested in a policy to adopt a healthy retailer incentive program.

Background

The retail environment is the tobacco industry’s main point of entry into local communities, and where the bulk of its advertising and promotional budgets are spent.¹⁻³ Tobacco advertising and promotions have an even greater effect on youth than peer pressure, and exposure increases the likelihood that youth will start to smoke.⁴

In 2013, the California Tobacco Control Program (CTCP) developed “Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community” (HSHC), a statewide campaign that seeks to improve the health of Californians through changes in community stores and to educate people how in-store product marketing influences consumption of unhealthy products. The campaign is a collaboration between tobacco control, alcohol prevention, and nutrition advocates to address common challenges and goals within the retail environment. In Santa Barbara County, TPSP is taking the lead on HSHC efforts.

Between 2013 and 2014, baseline data was collected across the state and in Santa Barbara County in three ways: an observation survey of tobacco retailers, a public intercept survey with residents, and key informant interviews with elected officials and city staff. In 2013, the observation survey of 177 stores throughout Santa Barbara County revealed that tobacco products are sold next to candies at checkout areas in over 50% of stores, and 76% sold sugary drinks at the checkout and near schools. Slightly less than half (47%) of stores than had any fruit or vegetables available.

During the HSHC key informant interviews with five elected officials and three business community members in 2014, most of the respondents (88%, n=8) expressed some level of support for an incentive program. Similarly, almost three-quarters of opinion survey respondents (73%, n=98) said they would be more likely to shop at a store with a high healthy retail environment rating.

During the Communities of Excellence (CX) survey conducted in the fall of 2013, at least seventeen coalition members and community partners participated in rating seventeen indicators. These partners represented health and social service organizations, the educational system, parks and recreation, and youth-serving agencies. To increase visibility of healthy foods and beverages, reduce ease of access and exposure to tobacco, alcohol, and unhealthy snacks and beverages, the coalition decided to develop an incentive program for retailers to make healthy changes to their store. Both the coalition and leaders at CTCP were enthusiastic about developing an innovative, pilot program that other programs in the state could follow. The coalition also felt a healthy retailer incentive program would have a bigger impact because it addressed several retail issues (e.g. advertising, availability, and placement) whereas the other possible objectives only focused on one.

“Healthy Stores for a Healthy Valley” (HSHV) was created, as a spin off from Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community (HSHC) initiative. HSHC efforts, both locally and statewide, helped to inform HSHV implementation locally. TPSP staff and coalition members selected to launch this project in the Santa Ynez Valley, which has a population of 20,000 residents living in both unincorporated areas of the county and the cities of Solvang and Buellton.⁵ The valley was selected for several reasons. First, in accordance with CTCP guidelines, the unincorporated part of the valley is covered by a tobacco retail licensing ordinance (TRL). Second, the community is fairly small and close-knit—ideal for spreading and sharing information. Lastly, the area is also close to local farms who might become partners and potentially donate time or goods to the project.

Evaluation Design

The objective is legislative policy adoption only. The evaluation design is non-experimental with pre- and post-measures to assess outcome, and several process measures to support and move the project forward. Table 1 outlines the outcome and key process measures used.

To measure outcome, a pre- and post-observation survey was conducted at all five of the participating HSHV stores in the third year of the workplan. The pre-survey was conducted either immediately before or at the time the stores agreed to participate. Approximately 1.5 to 2.5 months after agreeing to participate, a second observation survey was conducted to see if any healthier changes were made. The surveys assessed whether the stores made any changes in advertising/marketing, placement of products, or other business practices regarding tobacco, alcohol, and nutritional products. The survey instruments were based on the survey used for the HSHC observations as well as instruments developed by San Francisco and Santa Clara counties.

From fall 2015 to spring 2017, 121 county residents completed a public intercept survey in English and Spanish to primarily gauge whether they are more likely to shop at stores that sell and promote healthier items. The results were used to help recruit store owners to participate in the HSHV program. The survey was primarily disseminated in the Santa Ynez Valley, and 79% of respondents are residents of the valley. The survey was administered during several community events, promoted through social media outlets, and distributed through coalition

members and contacts. The questions were developed by researching customer surveys from other healthy retailer incentive programs around the state and country.

A consultant for TPSP recorded her conversations with the store owner for each store visit on a contact log and conducted an exit interview with each participating HSHV store. Neither the contact log or exit interview were originally intended as an evaluation activity or were included in the original scope of work, but both provide valuable insights. On the log, the business consultant noted the store's initial reaction to the project, barriers to participation, factors that facilitated change, and their reaction at the end of the project. The exit interview asks the stores to provide feedback on the program, customers' reactions, and whether they plan to keep the changes made during the program.

Five evaluation activities were conducted as part of the HSHC data collection efforts coordinated by CTCP among all counties in California: the observation of tobacco retailers in the spring of 2016, the key informant interviews in August, 2016, the public intercept in the third year, the media activity record, and the data collection training for 50 adult and youth volunteers to conduct the HSHC observation. For the HSHC observation survey, CTCP provided a random sample of zip codes to survey throughout Santa Barbara County with a total of 215 licensed tobacco retailers accessible to minors. Due to a variety of reasons, including that the data collectors did not feel safe or the store was closed, only 180 were actually surveyed.

The TPSP team members participated in the TCEC sponsored trainings to learn how to conduct the observations, public intercept survey, and interviews. For each HSHC evaluation activity, only key questions that provide insight about the healthy retailer program are included in this report and will primarily guide future efforts to expand HSHV. Summaries of each evaluation activity are attached. For more information about the study methodology, please refer to "2016 Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community Technical Report" found at

<http://healthystoreshealthycommunity.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/2016-Technical-Report-Final.pdf>

As an additional activity to inform this report, the evaluator interviewed the business consultant at the end of the third year.

Data analysis included a combination of descriptive, statistical, and content analysis techniques to report on both quantitative and qualitative data. A content analysis was used to analyze the media record, the contact log, exit interviews, and the open-ended questions on the key Informant interviews. The public intercept surveys, store observation surveys, and the closed-end questions on the interviews were analyzed by calculating frequencies and percentages.

Limitations: The major limitations of this design are: 1) while all volunteers were trained using the state protocol for the HSHC observations of tobacco retailers and several measures were taken to ensure data collectors understood the material, there may be inconsistency in the estimated observations of data between volunteers, 2) the convenience sample used for both public intercept surveys may represent the views of those who chose to participate rather than the entire city population, and 3) a comparison group was not used to assess the intervention's impact.

Table 1: Outcome and Process Evaluation Activities

Evaluation activity	Purpose	Sample	Analysis method	Timing/ Waves	Instrument Source	Appendix
Outcome						
Pre- & Post-observation survey of HSHV retailers	Assess the advertising, product placement, & product availability before and after the HSHV program	<u>Census sample:</u> All 5 participating HSHV retailers	Descriptive statistics & content analysis of open-ended questions	YR 3 2 waves	Modified instruments from HSHC observation survey & other counties	A
Process						
Public intercept survey of customers	Assess whether customers prefer to shop at stores that promote health	Convenience sample: 121	Descriptive statistics	YR 2 1 wave	Modified instruments from other programs	B
Contact log*	Record conversations with store owners/managers during store visits.	<u>Census sample:</u> 5 HSHV retailers	Content analysis	YR 3 1 wave	TPSP staff and business consultant	C
Exit interview*	Assess how stores benefited from participating & plans for the future.	<u>Census sample:</u> 5 HSHV retailers	Content analysis	YR 3 1 wave	Evaluator, TPSP staff, & business consultant	D
HSHC observation survey of tobacco retailers	Measure the availability, pricing, marketing, & promotion of tobacco products, alcohol, food items, & condoms at tobacco retailers	<u>Random sample of zip codes:</u> 180 Tobacco retailers	Descriptive statistics	YR 3 1 wave	Stanford University/Tobacco Control Evaluation Center (TCEC)	E
HSHC data collection training	To ensure quality data collection for HSHC store observations	50 youth & adult data collectors	Summary of training	YR 2	Kahootz quizzes	n/a
HSHC key informant interviews	Assess the level of support among policy makers for policies related to the retail environment	<u>Purposive sample:</u> 6 total including city council members, city staff, & members of the business community in Lompoc, Solvang, & Carpinteria	Descriptive statistics & content analysis of open ended questions	YR 3	Modified instrument provided by Stanford/TCEC	F
HSHC public intercept survey	Assess the level of support among county residents for policies related to the retail environment	<u>Convenience sample:</u> 81 county residents	Descriptive statistics	YR 3	Modified instrument provided by Stanford/TCEC	G
HSHC media record	Evaluate the effectiveness of the media pieces at delivering the message, accuracy & neutrality of the facts, and the level of support expressed	Media items produced through news websites, local radio, television, & newspapers	Content analysis	YR 3	Modified instrument provided by TCEC	H
Informal KII with business consultant*	To understand the story behind the objective.	<u>Purposive:</u> 1 business consultant	Content Analysis	YR 3 1 wave	Evaluator	n/a

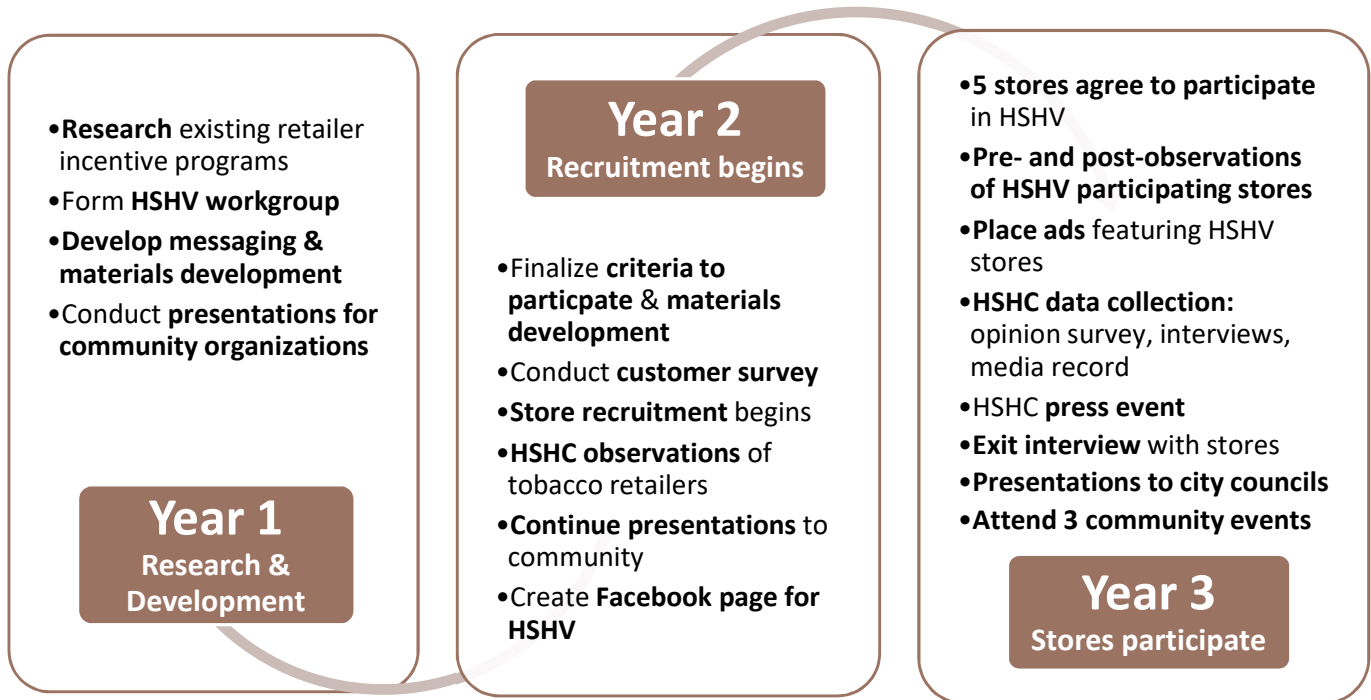
* Data collection activity not part of original scope of work or evaluation design.

Implementation and Results

1. Overview

Because this objective was ambitious and ground-breaking, the plan was to recruit three to five retailers for a pilot project in the early phases of the workplan. In the later stages, the pilot would be expanded and showcased to elected officials for a policy amendment. Figure 1 shows the major intervention and evaluation activities in each of the three funded years.

Figure 1: Intervention and Evaluation Activities in Chronological Order



2. Establish Workgroup

An early step in the first year was to establish the Healthy Stores Healthy Valley Workgroup to guide intervention strategies. The first meeting in September, 2014, was well attended by 14 individuals, including business managers, law enforcement, non-profit organizations, schools, parent groups, alcohol and drug programs, nutrition programs, and an elected official. At the second meeting, an analyst from the Los Angeles Department of Public Health shared her experiences creating a healthy stores recognition program.

Attendance dropped after the initial meeting, but a core group continued to participate throughout the workplan including representatives from a tobacco retailer. The group discussed branding, recruitment, networking, and challenges and barriers. Participants from the business community stressed that it was important to convey to store owners exactly what the program’s implications are for store revenue.

3. Message and Program Development

Early in the workplan, TPSP researched existing programs and discussed best practices with other counties such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, Santa Clara, and Sonoma. Based on this research and guidance from the HSHV Workgroup, TPSP developed and tailored a central campaign theme to the needs of both the retailers and community members: HSHV is committed to the economic vitality of the region and stands by the fact that the healthful choice can also be the profitable one.

This message guided the development of the program and associated materials. For instance, the criteria for participation were designed to have only positive impact financially and could be customizable to each store. Staff presented a menu of options but focused on placing healthy snacks or drinks like water at the checkout area, minimizing unhealthy messages around tobacco and alcohol, especially at three feet and below, and stocking more fruits, vegetables, and healthy grains.

Once the criteria were developed, TPSP staff and workgroup members designed materials to brand and promote the program. Materials included a logo, a window decal for participating stores, a tablecloth to display at community events, and a tote bag used as an incentive for participating stores. Two fact sheets describing the program were created, a bilingual one for members of the community and the other one for the stores. An advertising plan was developed to guide the placement of ads throughout the implementation phase. Finally, a HSHV Facebook page was designed.

4. Customer Opinion Survey

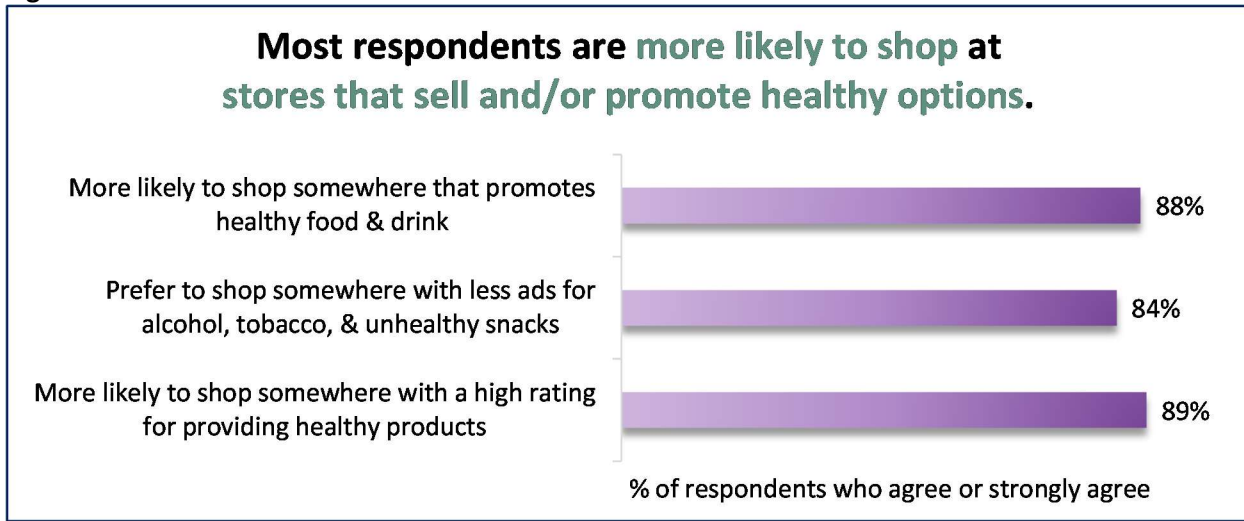
From the fall of 2015 to the spring of 2017, 121 county residents completed a public intercept survey in English and Spanish to assess their shopping preferences. The results were used to help recruit store owners to participate in the HSHV program. The survey was primarily disseminated in the Santa Ynez Valley, and 79% of respondents are residents of the valley.

A third of respondents (32%) said they shop most often at neighborhood or local markets, and all of the participating HSHV stores fall into this category. The remaining respondents shop most often at chain supermarkets (34%), pharmacies (12%), and farmers' markets (11%).

The results indicate an overwhelming preference among respondents to shop at stores that sell and/or promote healthy options. Most respondents agree or strongly agree with the following (Figure 2):

- 88% are more likely to shop somewhere that promotes healthy food and drink.
- 84% would prefer to shop somewhere with less ads for alcohol, tobacco, and unhealthy snacks.
- 89% would be more likely to shop somewhere with a high rating for providing healthy products.

Figure 2



5. Extensive outreach to community & business groups

During the first and second year, TPSP staff conducted at least twelve presentations to community groups to make connections with key opinion leaders and to educate about the retail environment. Initial outreach was conducted with the chamber of commerce, a countywide School Wellness Summit in the Santa Ynez Valley, the Santa Ynez Youth Coalition, and Healthy Lompoc. Though all of the presentations provided valuable networking opportunities, the Santa Ynez Youth Coalition and the Healthy Lompoc were the most fruitful. Several members of the youth coalition agreed to help disseminate public opinion surveys and to allow TPSP staff to speak at various community groups. Though the Healthy Lompoc Coalition does not serve the Santa Ynez Valley, the coalition’s chair became an active member of the HSPV workgroup and expressed strong interest in bringing a similar project to the City of Lompoc.

Education efforts continued in the second year with the Santa Ynez Union High School Board, all three chambers of commerce in the Santa Ynez Valley, the Live Well Santa Barbara County Coalition, and repeat presentations to the Healthy Lompoc Coalition and the Santa Ynez Valley Youth Coalition. The Live Well Coalition was an excellent venue to connect with nutrition partners throughout the county.

At one of the presentations, the Santa Barbara Food Action Plan (FAP) invited the TSPS Health Educator to participate on a countywide initiative to improve food access, quality, and education in the county. The TPSP Health Educator reached out to the three key leaders of FAP to introduce the HSHV and to discuss future opportunities for collaboration and partnership in the retail environment. A robust Food Action Plan was created in 2016 that includes the importance of working with retailers to help to improve the food system, listing strategies used by healthy retail programs and recommendations of the HSHV program. A sub-strategy is to incentivize markets, convenience stores, restaurants, and other food vendors to provide quality, affordable healthy products. This support of the FAP will assist the HSHV program in expanding into other communities in the county.

In the third year, TPSP created and disseminated letters that introduce the HSHV pilot project and solicit interest among non-participating tobacco retailers in target communities. All tobacco retail licensees in Santa Barbara County's unincorporated areas received the letter. A store in Santa Maria responded to the letter to express interest in participating in the program if it is expanded into Santa Maria. Additional outreach was done by the business consultant, who attended three community events to increase visibility of the HSHV program. Events included People Helping People Food Pantry, YMCA Healthy Kids Day, and the Earth Day in Buellton.

6. Store Recruitment: Challenges & Breakthrough

TPSP experienced several challenges in the first and second year, notably turnover in consultants and TPSP staff shortages. To connect with the community, a business consultant was hired who lives and works in the community. However, she found full-time employment elsewhere. A replacement was found, but she also resigned to pursue a fulltime job. The turnover stalled efforts to establish meaningful relationships with key stake holders, retailers, and community members.

Despite repeat visits with every store in the Santa Ynez Valley to introduce the program, retailers were slow to sign up. A concentrated effort was made with an owner of a small, gourmet grocery store in the rural area of Los Olivos. His family owns the majority of corner and liquor stores in the valley, so the initial hope was to recruit this owner, and the rest of his family would follow suit. However, his niece was caught selling tobacco to a minor and was traumatized by the experience. Asking this store owner to participate in the HSHV program was a stretch since TPSP staff are the same people who oversee his tobacco license and issue fines and suspensions. This was a lesson that might apply to other retailers as well.

In the second half of the third year, the HSHV program had a breakthrough. A highly committed consultant came on board who was local to the community. She recruited the first HSHV participant, a gas station associated with the casino owned by the local Chumash tribe. This retailer expressed support for HSHV early on and joined the workgroup meetings. They were already contemplating phasing out the sale of ESDs and were working with their food distributor, Core-Mark, to carry more healthy and fresh foods. One of their clerks had recently sold tobacco to a minor so they were particularly interested in improving their image. With the encouragement of the consultant, they formalized their commitment to make healthy changes and joined the HSHV program in February of 2017.

The second turning point was recruiting a liquor store owned by the cousin of the Los Olivos Market. The liquor store manager recognized that fresh and healthier foods “on the go” were a growing trend, but he was nervous to participate in case the new items did not sell. The consultant made frequent store visits on an almost weekly basis and helped the manager identify doable changes. Once this liquor store was recruited, their relatives at three stores throughout the valley were willing to participate. This included the gourmet market in Los Olivos, a convenience store with a popular deli, and a neighborhood market with a *carnicería* and *taquería*.

7. Changes Pledged & Motivations for Participation

Each retailer pledged to make at least two changes. Most of the changes centered on making fruit, healthy snacks and water more accessible and visible. The gas station made the only tobacco-related change and has begun to phase out selling ESDs. One store carried only a few limes prior to participation. Once they added a fruit stand carrying bananas, apples and oranges and put them on the front counter, they needed to stock three boxes of bananas each week to keep up with customer demand.

To varying degrees, each retailer recognized the industry-wide trend to carry healthier foods in response to the growing customer demand. Their food supplier, Core-Mark, promises on their website to help stores “profit from the fresh food trend” by supplying “farm to market” items and highly visible open air coolers to display fresh food. Their website explains,

“In order to stay relevant, having a quality fresh offering is paramount to the success of your store. Fresh is no longer just a trend, but a major consumer demand”.

The gas station was the most attuned to the customer demand for fresh food because Core-Mark had helped them analyze customers’ buying habits. Another retailer explained, “It’s definitely popular to eat healthier”.

In addition, a few retailers expressed a desire to carry healthier products. The wife at the liquor store expressed a sentiment shared by several of the other stores, “I don’t eat this food, and I don’t want to sell it - but people buy it.”

Out of the several incentives offered to the stores to participate in the HSHV program, the free advertising was the biggest draw. None of the stores had any advertising prior to the program. Ten ads were placed in a local bimonthly paper encouraging residents to visit the HSHV participating stores. In addition, the local newspaper donated a banner ad and large box ad on their website, and the participating Chumash gas station also donated ad space on digital displays at all gas pumps. An advertisement was also placed on the County of Santa Barbara television station free of charge, which ran for several months.

8. Additional Incentives for Participation

In addition to the free advertising, stores received other incentives to participate. The first was a window decal, or “badge of honor”, so customers can easily recognize participating stores. The second was a grocery tote for stores to give to customers. Future incentives may include store-specific events designed to drive customers to HSHV businesses.

Though not originally intended as an incentive, the consultant found a simple, yet effective way, to create space at the front counter to display more fresh fruit. Several stores were given a healthy food specific table-top rack, creating a simple way for stores to designate a space to display new items. The fruit rack was very popular with merchants as well as with the large supplier Core-Mark. The supplier saw the success and ease of the basket, and has offered these racks to all of their contracted stores ranging from Bakersfield to Lompoc.

9. Lessons Learned

Several lessons were learned throughout this pilot project including how and when to make the store visits. Several of the stores were initially wary of the project staff, but the local consultant was able to establish credibility and trust with the store owners. Store owners understood the consultant was well connected when customers would often greet her during the store visits. Regular store visits were also key. The stores knew to expect the consultant on Wednesdays and to make any changes before she arrived.

Though this strategy was successful, it was also time intensive. A ten-minute visit would often take forty-five minutes due to interruptions from food deliveries and customers.

Before stores could choose to stock healthier foods, they need to be able to quickly recognize healthy products. The consultant, who has a nutrition background, spent considerable time teaching the owners how to read nutrition labels. It is recommended that simple and effective educational materials are used to assist store owners in understanding product selection, product placement, and advertising. Future retail-incentive programs should consider partnering with nutrition programs.

The HSHV program started with small, manageable changes. Nutrition-related changes tended to be easier because it required a store substituting or adding a product. Reducing tobacco advertising or refraining from selling tobacco products marketed at children might affect the stores' profits. These types of changes would take more time. A possible solution would be to offer a tiered or phased program. As stores make bigger changes, they would receive larger incentives.

Some stores are savvier than others about which products to stock. For instance, a few stores did not realize they could ask their food distributor for alternative products to stock, and another retailer had items sitting on his shelves for seven years. This is an opportunity for future retail incentive programs to help stores use their space for something better, both for their profits and for the health of the community.

Initial communication with Core-Mark shows potential for a collaboration that might lead to a retailer incentive program with greater impact and fewer resources used for individual retailer education and technical assistance. Managers at the district level learned about HSHV when they discovered the fruit racks at participating stores. TPSP staff met with management who are interested in a possible collaboration. Because Core-Mark plays a large role in what a store stocks, they could be an influential gatekeeper and partner. They also sell alcohol though, so their goals might not be aligned with all aspects of a healthy retail environment.

10. Presentation to City Council

At the conclusion of the pilot program, the consultant and a HSHV taskforce member shared their successes at a city council meeting in the City of Buellton. The taskforce member and consultant also met with the Mayor of Buellton to inform her of the progress and outcomes of the project. The Mayor pledged to do her part by bringing it up at council, visiting the businesses in Buellton to

thank them and generally be supportive as needed. The elected officials were happy to hear that efforts were being made to work with businesses to create profitable and practical changes that will help to reduce a source of unhealthy products in the community. Additionally, it was noted that they are in support of increasing retail sales in the community.

11.Observations of Pilot Stores

In 2017, a pre- and post-observation survey was conducted at all five of the participating HSHV stores to see if any healthier changes were made. The changes are summarized in Table 2.

All of the stores made at least two changes. The most common type of change was the increase in the selection of healthy foods and fruit, followed by displaying healthier items in prominent locations such as the checkout counter. Two of the stores did not sell fruit before HSHV, and they now display fruit in the rack provided by HSHV at the checkout counter. Some of the changes fall under more than one category, so these changes are listed more than once in Table 2.

Table 2

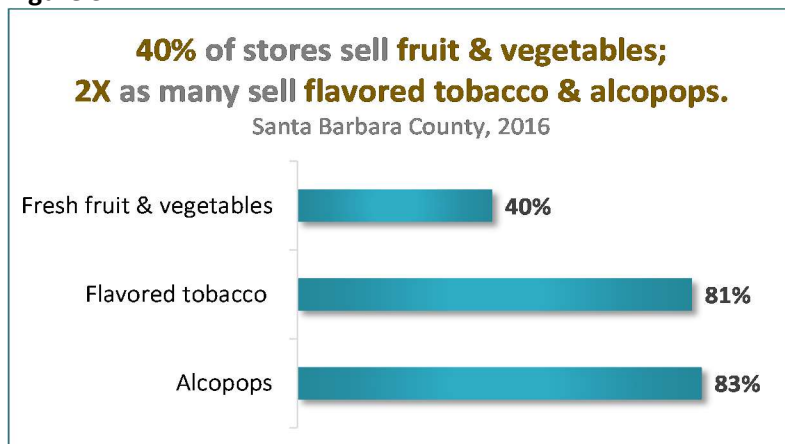
Observation Results: Summary of Changes Made by HSHV Stores			
Type of change		Number of stores adopting change	Comments
Product Placement	Stock water at checkout counter	3 (60%)	
	Healthier items/fruit displayed prominently (i.e. at front counter, fruit basket, new rack, etc.)	3 (60%)	Includes 2 stores displaying fruit basked provided by HSHV.
	Healthy items at 3 feet or below	2 (40%)	
Product Availability	Increase selection of healthy items/fruit	4 (80%)	Two of these stores did not sell fruit before HSHV and now display fruit in basket at checkout counter.
	Phase out ESDs	1 (20%)	Store is selling the few remaining ESDs, but will not resupply.
Advertising	Decrease in window coverage	1 (20%)	Store did not pledge to make this change. Store went above and beyond contract requirements.
	Unhealthy ads removed from 3 feet or below	2 (40%)	These are the same stores that added healthy items to 3 feet or below. Related change.

12.HSHC Observation Results

In the spring of 2016, an observation survey of 180 tobacco retailers in Santa Barbara was conducted as part of the HSHC statewide data collection. Two questions on the HSHC are especially relevant to the HSHV program because they examine the most common changes adopted by participating stores: the availability of fresh fruit and vegetables and product placement at the main checkout counters. If the HSHV program is expanded in the future, these HSHC results will provide baseline data for comparisons.

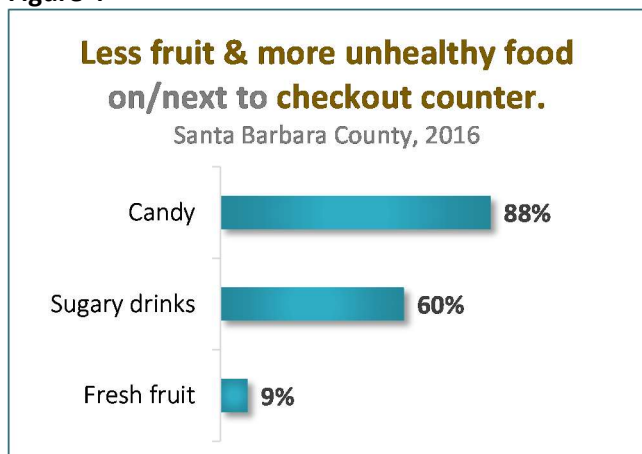
Healthier products, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, were far less available than unhealthy products such as tobacco and alcohol. Only 40%, 95% C.I (31.0, 49.7) of the stores surveyed in 2016 sell fresh fruits and vegetables, but twice as many sell flavored tobacco products (81%), 95% C.I (71.9, 89.5) and sweet flavored 'alcopops' (83%), 95% C.I (68.4, 96.6). (Figure 3)

Figure 3



Unlike fresh fruit, unhealthy items were commonly found at the main checkout counters, a highly visible area of the store. Very few stores had fruit (9%) placed at/next to the checkout counter, but almost all (88%) had candy at/next to the counter. Sugary drinks are also commonly found at this location (61%), 95% C.I (52.1, 68.4). (Figure 4)

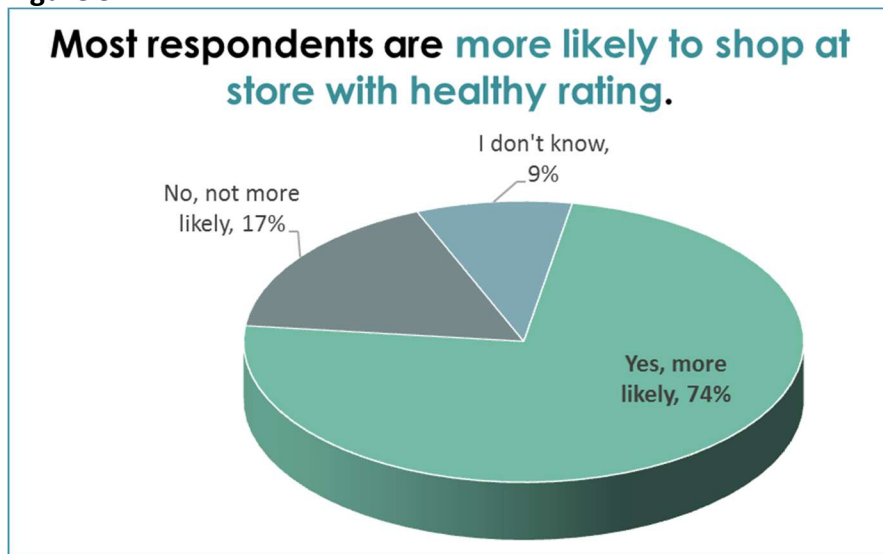
Figure 4



13.HSHC Public Intercept Survey

In the third year, a public intercept survey was conducted primarily in Santa Maria and South County in English and Spanish as part of the statewide HSHC data collection efforts. Like the customer survey in Santa Ynez in 2015, the HSHC survey included a similar question about health ratings and yielded similar results. If stores were rated, (5 stars = healthiest / 0 stars = unhealthiest), most respondents of the HSHC survey (74%, n=81) said they would be more likely to shop at a store with a high rating. (Figure 5) These results may support efforts to expand the HSHV program to other areas of the county.

Figure 5



14.HSHC Key informant interviews

To obtain the perspective of key decision makers and to guide future intervention strategies, the evaluator conducted six key informant interviews in August of 2016 with elected officials, prominent city staff, and leaders in the business community in Solvang, Lompoc, and Carpinteria. The interview instrument was based on the required questions for the statewide HSHC data collection. Though none of the questions were directly related to a healthy retailer incentive program, the results provide valuable insights about key decision makers' awareness of retail environment issues and the receptiveness of some communities to an expanded HSHV program and related policy.

One respondent represented the chamber of commerce in Solvang, which is located in the Santa Ynez Valley. She did not support any of the retail-related policies discussed in the interview or answer all of the interview questions. Additional interviews were attempted in Solvang with elected officials who are the most open to tobacco-control policies, but the city officials declined to participate. This response from key decision makers in Solvang is not encouraging for policy adoption of retail-related policies.

During the interviews with the other five respondents in Lompoc and Carpinteria, one of the questions assessed the respondents' awareness levels about how the retail environment impacts health. All five respondents agreed that there is a relationship between the health crises we are seeing (i.e., diabetes, heart disease, obesity, lung cancer) and the food, beverage, alcohol, and tobacco products that are being sold in stores, but four out of five struggled to explain the connection. Most blamed poor, individual choices for the increase in obesity. One respondent said,

"If you don't take care of the machine, what happens to it? I think we consume about 55 gallons of corn syrup a year, and this is what we use to fatten up cows."

Though the respondents were not asked to assess their support for a healthy retailer incentive policy, they did express low to moderate support for other policies related to the retail environment. Banning menthol cigarettes and flavored tobacco received the highest support (n=5, 60%), followed by limiting the number of tobacco retailers near schools (n=6, 50%). Less than 50% of the respondents supported the remaining policies, including no supporters of tobacco-free pharmacies.

Based on the interview results, many policymakers may need more education before they will be ready to consider adopting policies to improve the health of the retail environment. These interviews were conducted before TPSP shared the results of the HSHV program with policymakers, so awareness and support levels may have changed. In addition, the interview results may have been different if the sample had included representatives from a broader sample of communities within the county, especially from some of the more progressive cities.

15. Media Record and the Statewide Press Event

As part of the coordinated regional press event to release findings in March 2017 from the HSHC store observations, department staff sent out press releases in both English and Spanish to all media outlets in the area. As part of this data release, a tri-county (Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo) press call was held. During this call, each Health Officer commented on the data and answered questions from the media. Seven news outlets picked up the story, primarily focusing on how the tobacco industry targets youth through product flavors, advertising, and product placement within stores. Additionally, the uptick in ESD availability and teen use rates in the county was featured in all articles. Media pieces also pointed to the lack of fresh fruits and vegetables in stores, and availability of condoms. From March through June 2017, a total of 7 pieces appeared in the media, including an on camera interview of the Project Director and Health Officer of the county. This media coverage and dissemination of data is important to gather community and policymaker support for the local implementation of the healthy retail project. Additionally, it helped to create momentum for the expansion of the healthy retail program into other parts of the county. Media efforts were successful in generating positive coverage about tobacco control issues in local media.

16.Exit Interviews with HSHV Retailers

The business consultant conducted a brief exit interview with the participating retailers in May and June of 2017. The following are key findings:

- 100% said the new healthier items are selling.
- 100% plan to keep these changes.
- 80% said they will continue to seek out new healthier products to carry.
- Owners/managers said they would consider the following changes in the future: adding fresh cut fruit in small containers, small packaged vegetables and 100% juice. One mentioned the value of doing food demonstrations with healthy food samples on busy weekends or peak traffic times.
- The biggest challenges are finding the space to add new baskets or racks so it has been easier to blend the healthier snack foods in with the existing unhealthy products then to create separate zones. Also, healthier food is often more expensive to buy so there is usually less profit to be made.

This quote from an owner illustrates a common theme found during the exit interviews:

"I've noticed just by moving healthier items to the front counter area, people will buy them. It's definitely popular to eat healthier. Working with this program has been a good experience, and I haven't lost any revenue. I plan to keep making healthier changes and asking my vendors what other things they can offer."

17.Sharing results

Key findings were included in presentations to elected officials, health focused coalitions across the county, and with community members. Results were presented through infographics, fact sheets, and social media posts. City or location specific aggregate data was made available to community partners upon request. In addition, highlights from this report were shared with the HSHV Workgroup and the CEASE (Coalition Engaged in a Smoke Free Effort) coalition at meetings in the spring of 2017.

Conclusions and Recommendations

During the 2014-17 workplan, the targeted jurisdiction did not adopt a policy to create a healthy retailer incentive program. Though the objective was not met, TPSP staff members successfully created and implemented a pilot program to reward neighborhood markets for offering healthier retail options. All five participating retailers adopted at least two healthy changes, and the most common type of change was the increase in the selection of healthy foods and fruit. Other changes included offering fruit at checkout counters, moving water bottles to the front of the store, and beginning to phase out the sale of ESDs. The next steps might include expanding the program to more stores and communities, collaborating with a national food distributor, Core-Mark, and continuing to present the pilot program to elected officials who might be interested in a policy to adopt a healthy retailer incentive program.

One of the main keys to the initial success of HSHV was that a flexible menu of small, manageable changes were offered to stores. However, a complete store makeover is not possible with a limited budget and limited time. Stores might be able to graduate to bigger changes with a tiered or phased project over a longer period of time. Another possible way to reach a greater impact with fewer resources is to explore a collaboration with Core-Mark. This national food distributor based in San Francisco is encouraging convenience stores to carry more fresh foods in order to profit from the growing customer demand for healthier foods.

The following summarizes all of the lessons learned and provides recommendations for other projects working on healthy retailer incentive program:

- A central campaign message needs to emphasize that the goals of the retailer incentive program are to create a healthier retail environment without affecting the financial viability of store. However, this message may be challenging to keep once retailer changes are expanded to include limiting advertising and product availability.
- The face of the program needs to be someone local to the community, and the program staff for TRL might not be the best messenger in some cases.
- A retailer incentive program can result in small changes to improve the retail environment, but, with limited resources, a complete store make over is not possible. Even a small scale program is time intensive and requires a significant advertising budget.
- Future efforts should consider a tiered or phased program over a long period of time. As stores make bigger changes, they get bigger rewards.
- A successful retailer incentive program will depend on collaborating with nutrition partners. Complex nutrition information needs to be simplified so retailers can quickly recognize healthy products.
- Future efforts will need to explore whether this model can be used for tobacco and alcohol-related changes. These changes might be more challenging because the retailers are being asked to remove a possible source of income instead of substituting a healthy item for an unhealthy item.
- Initial communication with Core-Mark shows potential for a collaboration resulting in a larger impact with fewer resources.

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