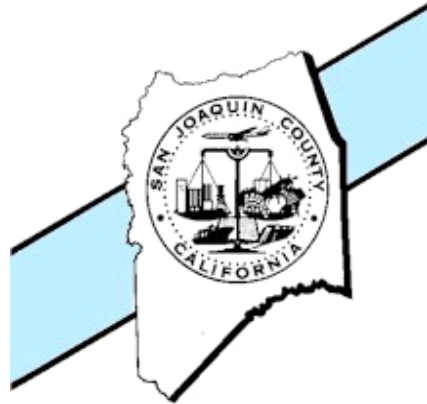


Reduction of Window Tobacco Advertising in the City of Stockton

July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2017



San Joaquin County Public Health Services Smoking & Tobacco Outreach Prevention Program

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Submitted June 30, 2017

Contract # CTCF-13-39, Term: 07/01/14 – 06/30/17

This report was made possible by funds received from the Tobacco Tax Health Protection Act of 1988-Proposition 99, through the California Department of Public Health.

Recommended Citation: Perales, DC, Perales, D., Pineda, M, (2017), "Reduction of Window Tobacco Advertising in the City of Stockton," Stockton, CA.

ABSTRACT

From 2014-2017, the Smoking & Tobacco Outreach/Prevention Program (STOPP) worked to build support for adopting a signage policy in Stockton that would reduce the amount of advertising on store windows to no more than 15% of window space. At the beginning of this period, Stockton was enduring a financial collapse, which in turn created a sensitive political atmosphere in relation to business regulations. The priorities of community leaders were to reduce crime, improve housing, and improve literacy rates, while rebuilding the local economy. Aware of the political climate, STOPP sought to reduce window signage in local retailers as a way to continue to mitigate tobacco influences without placing a financial burden on local retailers. This policy was also viewed as a way to contribute to existing priorities because it reduced blight in the community, which is correlated to the reduction of crime.

STOPP strategies included fostering new community partners, identifying local retailers to voluntarily reduce their signage, and using local data collection and education to influence both public and decision-maker support for this type of policy. STOPP successfully partnered with the Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention and Lifetime of Wellness programs to develop a comprehensive healthy retail program, *Refresh San Joaquin*, which included window signage criteria. STOPP collected data from over 300 local stores and over 200 community members, in addition to conducting key informant interviews. Results of these surveys were then used to foster new partners like the NAACP and to educate the public about the important role local retailers have in creating tobacco-free communities.

STOPP was able to show that over 52% of stores were not in compliance with the current Lee Law and that over 82% of stores advertised unhealthy products. Moreover, through the collaborative effort of *Refresh San Joaquin*, STOPP successfully assisted seven local retailers to reduce their window sign coverage to be less than 15%. Although a formal local ordinance was not adopted by the city of Stockton, STOPP made significant progress in educating key opinion leaders and decision-makers and in building public support for future adoption of policies.

AIM and OUTCOME

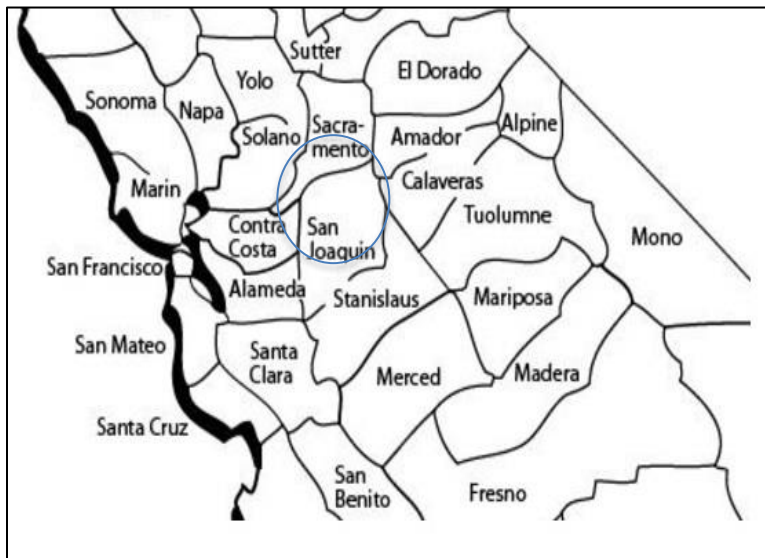
In order to reduce community exposure to tobacco marketing and to enhance community safety and neighborhood aesthetics, the San Joaquin County Smoking & Tobacco Outreach/Prevention Program (STOPP) set the following objective:

By June 30, 2017 the City of Stockton will adopt a sign policy to reduce window advertising by reducing the coverage of store windows with any type of advertising to no more than 15% of window space in the stores. The corresponding Communities of Excellence indicators are 1.1.18 Advertising on Storefront Windows and 1.1.2. Store Exterior Marketing.

Although STOPP was not able to pass a local ordinance that required a reduction of signage to no more than 15% for all retailers in Stockton, it did make significant strides with a number of local retailers that are becoming champions for reducing window signage and for improving the retail environment to support community health. Additionally, STOPP's data gathering efforts for the *Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community* campaign have built relationships and established an important foundation not only to reduce window signage but also to advance more comprehensive tobacco policies in the future.

BACKGROUND

San Joaquin County is located near the geographic center of California and is part of California's



Central Valley, one of the richest agricultural areas in the world and the fifth richest agricultural county in the country. San Joaquin County's population is culturally diverse and often described as exemplifying California's future today. In 2016, the county's population was estimated at 734,000. It has seven incorporated cities whose populations range from 307,000 in Stockton to 7,000 in Escalon. The 2015 estimated ethnic/racial composition of county residents showed that nearly 60% were White (with

34.3% being White and non-Latino), followed by 14.8% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 7.1% Black/African American.¹

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. American FactFinder; Community Facts: San Joaquin County, CA. Available at https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml

In 2012-2014, smoking prevalence among San Joaquin County adults was 15.5%, slightly above the overall prevalence of 12.7% for all California adults.² Tobacco use prevalence among youth is also slightly higher than the state, at 14.6%, compared to 13.8% for California.³ The cost of smoking in San Joaquin County, including health care and loss of productivity, was \$139.8 million.⁴

Tobacco and alcohol advertising has been shown to affect youth tobacco and alcohol consumption behaviors. A report by the U.S. Surgeon General noted that all forms of tobacco industry advertising and promotion influences young people to start using tobacco and adolescents who are exposed to cigarette advertising often find the ads appealing.⁵ Specifically, Sidenberg, et al, found that storefront cigarette advertising that increased exposure and promoted youth initiation were more prominent in low-income and minority communities.⁶ Similar studies have found the same effect of alcohol advertising on underage and youth binge drinking.

Both the 2013 and 2016 Healthy Stores for Healthy Communities (HSHC) surveys found that 82% of the 281 sampled San Joaquin County stores that sell tobacco and alcohol had unhealthy exterior advertising compared to 71% (in 2013) and 67% (in 2016) of stores statewide. The 2016 HSHC survey also found that:

- 62% of sampled stores had alcohol storefront ads,
- 49% advertised unflavored cigarettes on windows, and
- 40% advertised sugary drinks on windows, doors, or on-building/sidewalks.

Furthermore, the 2016 survey found that 52% of stores had more than 33% of their doors and clear windows covered with signs, in violation of the Lee Law. However, as noted by ChangeLab Solutions (a nonprofit organization that provides legal information on matters relating to public health), the Lee Law cannot be used to reduce specific types of signage (e.g., alcohol, tobacco, and sugary beverages), as this may violate First Amendment rights. Instead, public health advocates should "...focus on traditional police power rationales, such as improving the safety and aesthetics of a community."⁷

Recognizing the potential impact of tobacco industry advertising increasing the likelihood that youth will start smoking and deter current users from quitting, the San Joaquin County Smoking & Tobacco Outreach/Prevention Program (STOPP) and its STOPP Community Coalition partners chose as its primary objective the reduction of exterior retail signage from 33% to less than 15%. This decision was influenced by a number of key factors unique to Stockton at this

² UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. AskCHIS 2012-2014. Current smoking status for adults age 18 and over. [Online]. <http://ask.chis.ucla.edu/>. Accessed May 26, 2016.

³ University of California, San Diego. 2016 California Student Tobacco Survey. San Diego, CA, February 2017.

⁴ Max W, Sung HY, Lightwood J. The impact of changes in tobacco control funding on healthcare expenditures in California, 2012-2016. *Tob Control*. 2013; 22(e1): e10-e15. doi:10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2011-050130. and State of California, Department of Finance. E-1 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State with Annual Percent Change — January 1, 2015 and 2016. Sacramento, CA, May 2016.

⁵ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Public Health Service. Office of the Surgeon General. Preventing tobacco use among youth and young adults a report of the Surgeon General. (2012)

⁶ Andrew B. Seidenberg, Robert W. Caughey, Vaughan W. Rees, and Gregory N. Connolly. Storefront Cigarette Advertising Differs by Community Demographic Profile. *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol 24, Issue 6, 2010.

⁷ ChangeLab Solutions (March 2016). Model California Ordinance for Reducing Storefront Window Signage

time. Foremost was that Stockton was just coming out of bankruptcy, which had been declared in 2012. Any policy that placed a financial burden on businesses was sure to fail, so the Lee Law policy was prioritized, in part, because there were no financial costs for retailers to comply. Another important variable is that Stockton was facing serious crime and safety issues in lower income neighborhoods. Since stores in lower income neighborhoods had higher percentages of windows and exterior walls covered with unhealthy advertising, this policy could play a role in reducing blight, which is linked with higher crime and violence. Finally, this was considered an important equity issue. Communities of color and lower income communities in Stockton have higher concentrations of tobacco and alcohol retailers, so this type of policy could have more positive influence in these neighborhoods.

STOPP engaged a number of non-traditional partners to support this policy, such as violence prevention advocates (i.e., Reinvent South Stockton) and the smart growth movement (i.e., Healthy Neighborhoods Collaborative) looking to revitalize downtowns. In addition, STOPP decided to recruit and train volunteers from the new partners to help educate business leaders and retailers on the Lee Law and to increase their awareness of tobacco exposure issues.

EVALUATION METHODS and DESIGN

The evaluation design for this objective was policy adoption only. The evaluation plan incorporated the gathering of formative data that provided the STOPP staff with information to guide their intervention activities and advocacy strategies. In addition, the project evaluators held monthly evaluation calls with STOPP staff to monitor intervention activities.

As noted in Table 1 below, the following process data were collected during the grant.

Table 1: Objective2: Key Outcome and Process Evaluation Activities

Evaluation Activity	Purpose	Sample	Instrument Source	Analysis Method	Timing/Waves
<i>Process</i>					
HSHC Stores Data Collection Training:	Ensure quality of data collection for store observation surveys	22 STOPP staff and volunteers	Evaluation consultant and STOPP staff	Descriptive statistics and content analysis	Year 2 1 Wave
HSHC Store Observations	Measure the availability of various tobacco products and marketing	Sample of 281 retailers	Stanford University	Descriptive statistics	Year 2 1 Wave
HSHC Public Intercept Survey	Measure public opinion on policy issues in the retail environment plus 3 questions of interest for the county	Convenience sample of 250 Stockton residents	Tobacco Control Evaluation Center	Descriptive statistics	Year 3 1 Wave

Key Informant Interview	Gather opinions and attitudes regarding the health crisis in Stockton and whether stores' promotion and sales of tobacco and alcohol should be regulated.	Purposive sample of 5 (a police sergeant, a storeowner, a school board member, a city planner, and a city council representative)	Adaptation of TCEC 2016 HSHC Key Informant Interview instrument	Content analysis	Year 3 1 Wave
Evaluation Activity	Purpose	Sample	Instrument Source	Analysis Method	Timing/Waves
<i>Outcome</i>					
Media Activity Record	Track the number and placement of media produced to promote awareness of the campaign	Census of all press releases	Evaluation consultant	Descriptive statistics and content analysis	Year 3 1 Wave

Quantitative data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and qualitative data were analyzed through a content analysis.

The information gathered from the above evaluation activities provided STOPP staff with information on: 1) the readiness of staff and volunteers to conduct store observations and intercept surveys, 2) data on the percent of stores whose windows and clear doors exceeded Lee Law requirements, 3) key informant opinions on whether government should play a role in making stores healthier, 4) public opinion on the ease of purchasing tobacco, alcohol, and other unhealthy products in stores, and 5) the degree of support for policies that could create healthier store environments. Information on the above evaluation activities and their associated instruments are shown in Table 1.

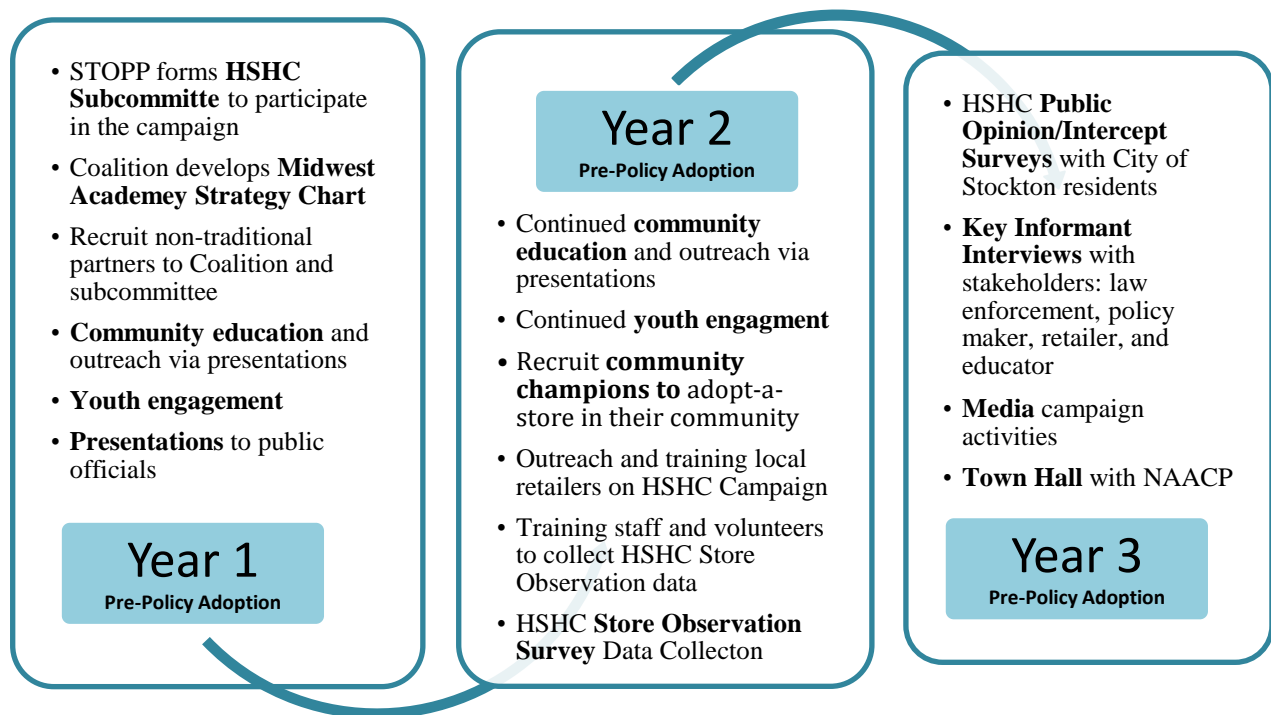
Limitations

The opinions of the public intercept survey participants, all self-selected Stockton residents, may not reflect the views of the county's other 400,000 residents, some of whom live in more conservative areas.

IMPLEMENTATION and RESULTS

The first phase of the intervention consisted of the formation of a STOPP Coalition HSHC Subcommittee, developing an action plan, and compiling educational materials for various aspects of the campaign. The subcommittee then worked to garner support for the HSHC Campaign through presentations aimed at youth, local law enforcement, and key opinion leaders. As a result, STOPP successfully recruited several non-traditional partners and four new members of the STOPP Coalition. Recruitment activities also resulted in new youth and community engagement opportunities for the HSHC Campaign. In the latter half of the intervention period, activities focused on recruiting and training community champions to perform observational surveys, offering technical support for retailers, and solidifying the Coalition's recommendations on Stockton's existing signage policy.

Figure 1: Key Intervention and Evaluation Activities in Chronological Order



Below are the highlights of the intervention and evaluation activities across the 3-year period.

Capacity building and community education

In September 2014, coalition members and collaborative partners attended a strategic planning meeting, during which they completed the Midwest Academy Strategy Chart and agreed on an action plan for achieving the objective. Their intervention strategy included:

- Recruiting non-traditional partners to the STOPP Coalition to diversify their support and strengthen credibility.

- Organizing for participation in the statewide HSHC Campaign.
- Heightening community awareness of the HSHC Campaign and the Lee Law.
- Recruiting and engaging youth in the intervention activities.
- Educating retailers about the HSHC Campaign.

Recruiting non-traditional partners

The STOPP Coalition created an HSHC Subcommittee, which met for the first time on January 22, 2015. An HSHC educational packet was developed for community presentations and for distribution to key opinion leaders. The packet contained a 2013 HSHC survey factsheet and the 2014 public intercept survey results. In early 2015, STOPP met with organizations such as Community Partnership for Families of San Joaquin, Stocktonians Taking Action to Neutralize Drugs (STAND), and Reinvent South Stockton to involve these groups in the HSHC Campaign. STOPP staff joined the San Joaquin Pride Stakeholder Committee, members of whom expressed interest in educating youth on the negative effects of tobacco advertising in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer (LGBTQ) community. Staff also attended a meeting organized by the Dorothy Jones Community Center in South Stockton. This resulted in a local National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) member, who is involved at the Center, joining the Coalition in 2016. STOPP outreach also resulted in two new experts being recruited to the Coalition: a social research evaluation organization that participated in the HSHC data collection efforts (San Joaquin Community Data Co-Op) and a University of Pacific professor whose expertise involves smoking cessation.

Staff and Community Education

STOPP staff attended trainings and webinars throughout the three-year grant period to prepare them to conduct community education presentations, to keep them informed on emerging tobacco issues, and to build internal capacity in tobacco prevention. Staff attended in-person trainings organized by the California Tobacco Control Program (CTCP) on E-Cigarettes, HSHC Train the Trainer, and Communities of Excellence in Tobacco Control. They also participated in 12 webinars that covered topics including HSHC Store Survey Sampling, New Tobacco Products, and Reducing Storefront Advertising.

Informational presentations and educational outreach were conducted to heighten community awareness of the HSHC Campaign and the Lee Law, as well as to garner support from policy makers and law enforcement. For example, in April 2015, STOPP presented to the Stockton Unified School District Police Department on the need to enforce tobacco control laws. As a result, one of the department's officers was assigned to join the coalition as a liaison, which helped to provide the Coalition with a law enforcement perspective. STOPP staff presented at the Greater Stockton Chamber of Commerce meeting and distributed educational packets containing a 2013 HSHC factsheet and the public intercept survey results from June 2014. Staff met with the City of Stockton's Planning Commissioner in June 2015 and a City Council candidate in September of that same year. Both expressed willingness to lend support to the HSHC Campaign via community connections.

Media

STOPP developed four press releases over the course of the three-year grant period and took part in the coordinated regional press event to release findings from the Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community (HSHC) store observations. Each media release was sent to 143 community-based and faith-based organizations, emailed to 200-225 Public Health employees, and posted on Twitter (18 followers) and Facebook (191 people that follow the page). Media releases were also sent to 100 individuals from various media sources (i.e., print, TV & radio outlets). In the first year, STOPP sent out a press release in June 2015 to inform the public about the HSHC 2013 store observation results regarding unhealthy exterior advertising and a partnership with the San Joaquin County Public Health Services Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention (NEOP) program to educate the community about unhealthy store advertising. This release was not picked up by local media but the 2015 HSHC release was published by Caravan News which featured it on June 30, 2015.⁸ Caravan News is a digital-only media outlet with 350,000 – 400,000 page views monthly. Digital circulation includes residents in the Cities of Stockton, Tracy, Lodi, and Manteca.⁹ The second release informed the public about the new California tobacco control legislation effective June 9, 2016, and STOPP’s ongoing activities to reduce unhealthy store signage and protect county residents from secondhand smoke exposure. In 2017, STOPP issued its third press release about the results from the 2016 HSHC observations related to San Joaquin County youth exposure to unhealthy messaging from tobacco and alcohol ads and other key findings. The release also informed the public about 13 separate press events being held statewide to share the 2016 HSHC results. This release was published by Caravan News, on March 8, 2017.¹⁰ The fourth press release was sent to local media to generate support for the Men’s Health Awareness Breakfast/Town Hall event, held on June 9, 2017, co-sponsored with the NAACP.

Additionally, STOPP developed an informational video describing the Lee Law and the benefits of participating in the healthy retail program, *Refresh San Joaquin*. The video will be used to generate interest and support for a stronger retail policy, such as content neutral signage reduction. The video will also be used as an example to other retailers and decision makers to illustrate the benefits of adopting the retail standards of *Refresh San Joaquin* program.

STOPP will continue to cultivate its media release relationship with Caravan News and will also make stronger efforts to engage writers from the Stockton-based newspaper, The Record, which has a daily print circulation of 59,000 and a website presence. The Record has published San Joaquin County Public Health Department related stories in the past, especially announcements and comments by the county’s Public Health Officer, Dr. Alvaro Garza. However, future efforts to oppose the financial and advertising influence of the tobacco and alcohol industries will require fresh efforts to engage the print, digital, and television media. STOPP will work with its existing and new partners to renew its *Refresh San Joaquin* efforts by applying the strategic use of local media to support their efforts to advance its public health policies and by supporting

⁸ Caravan News. STOPP says “Go” to Healthier Neighborhood Stores. June 30, 2015.
<http://www.caravannews.com/Sports/stopp-says-go-to-healthier-neighborhood-stores>

⁹ Caravan News. Advertising. <http://www.caravannews.com/Advertising>

¹⁰ Caravan News. New Survey Reveals San Joaquin County Youth Still Bombarded with Tobacco and Alcohol Ads.
<http://www.caravannews.com/Sports/new-survey-reveals-san-joaquin-county-youth-still-bombarded-with-tobacco-and-alcohol-ads>

local retailers to sell healthier products. To this end, there are new stories that can be shared with the media, such as recent efforts by Stockton Mayor Michael Tubbs to create healthier stores and develop other community assets in the low-income South Stockton community. Other stories that can support adoption of window signage policies include topic-specific written and visual messages that focus on the very high availability of flavored and menthol tobacco products in local stores, and the pervasive advertising to children and communities of color.

Youth Engagement

Youth outreach and engagement was another focus of the intervention activities. Educational materials about the HSHC Campaign were compiled and specifically aimed at reaching youth. The materials were used in presentations and educational activities with youth programs including Friday Night Live, Mandela Marketplace, and Reinvent South Stockton. Friday Night Live was an essential community partner in STOPP's youth engagement activities, particularly in the first two years of the intervention period. STOPP conducted several trainings and presentations for Friday Night Live chapters on topics such as the Lee Law and tobacco marketing strategies that were well attended. In 2016, STOPP began developing a strong relationship with the youth program of Reinvent South Stockton, a collaborative whose aim is to empower its residents to transform community through improving safety, housing, education, job creation and health. In 2016, the Reinvent South Stockton youth group gathered community feedback on existing designs of HSHC Campaign materials and shared responses with STOPP staff. In addition, STOPP staff facilitated youth-led educational and intervention activities. For example, students from Stockton Friday Night Live Chapters completed a photovoice project documenting Lee Law violations in their communities.

Retailer Education

In the second year of the intervention, STOPP began training community educators and local retailers. Beginning in July 2015, STOPP collaborated with the Public Health Department's Lifetime of Wellness Program, Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Program (NEOP) and Mandela Marketplace (NEOP's Retail Consultant) to identify ways of empowering and recruiting community champions. As a result of the partnerships with LOW and NEOP, STOPP staff informally educated seven retailers about the HSHC Campaign, and educational materials were finalized to train community champions to conduct formal educational visits. In June 2015, STOPP staff issued a press release to highlight collaborative efforts between STOPP and NEOP.

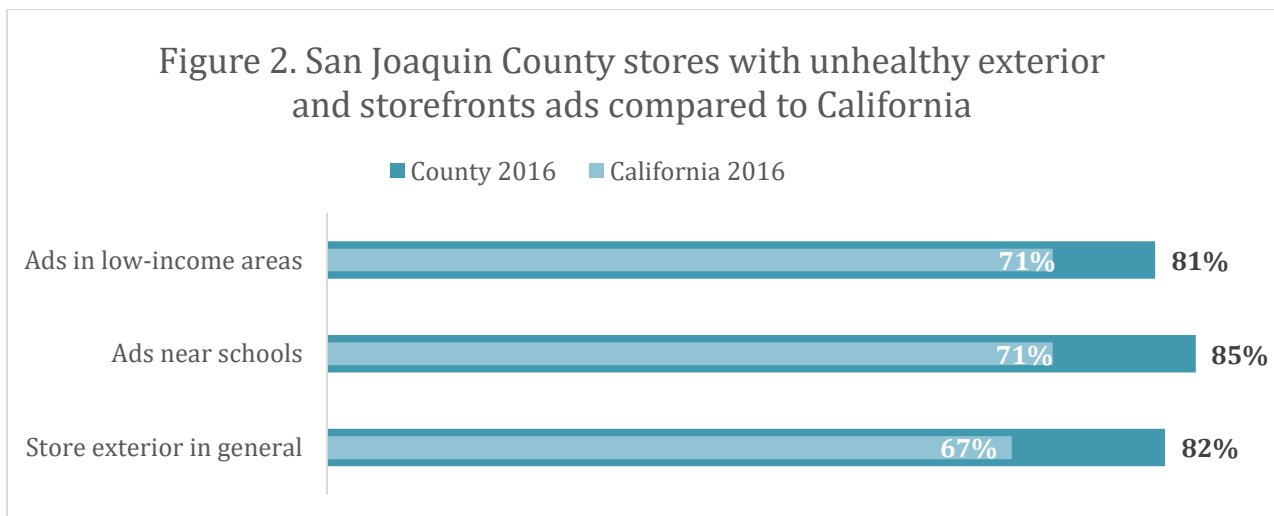
Store Observations

In April 2016, STOPP staff trained 21 community partners and coalition members to conduct observational surveys on Lee Law violations. A second course was offered the following month for seven coalition members and Public Health Services staff who expressed interest but were unable to attend the first training in April.

In June 2016, the STOPP participated in the statewide HSHC observational survey. Staff and partners collected data on a sample of 281 retailers in five San Joaquin County cities. This contrasted with the 2013 HSHC observations that randomly sampled 120 stores. Trained data collectors used the Tobacco Control Evaluation Center (TCEC) provided handheld devices

(Android tablets) to document the availability and placement of tobacco and alcohol products, healthy and unhealthy foods, and the internal and external location of tobacco and alcohol advertising. The greater number of stores surveyed in 2016 provided stronger data for understanding the tobacco retail environment. Cleaned data in an Excel and an SPSS data file were provided by the Stanford University Prevention Research Center to the STOPP evaluation consultants in October 2016.¹¹ Frequencies were conducted on approximately 300 variables. Tables comparing results on the same 30 variables for San Joaquin County and California in 2013 and 2016 were developed and shared with the STOPP staff (see FER Appendix 1). In addition, a table comparing selected results from the 2016 survey across the five cities surveyed (i.e., Stockton, Tracy, Manteca, Lathrop, and Lodi) was also prepared so that STOPP could share the findings with local cities (see FER Appendix 2).

The data specific to advertising showed that the percent of stores with unhealthy exterior advertising (82%), unhealthy storefronts near schools (85%) and unhealthy storefronts in low-income neighborhoods (81%) were virtually the same in 2013 and 2016 (see FER Appendix 1). When compared against the state, San Joaquin County stores surveyed had 10% to 15% more unhealthy advertising (See Figure 2).



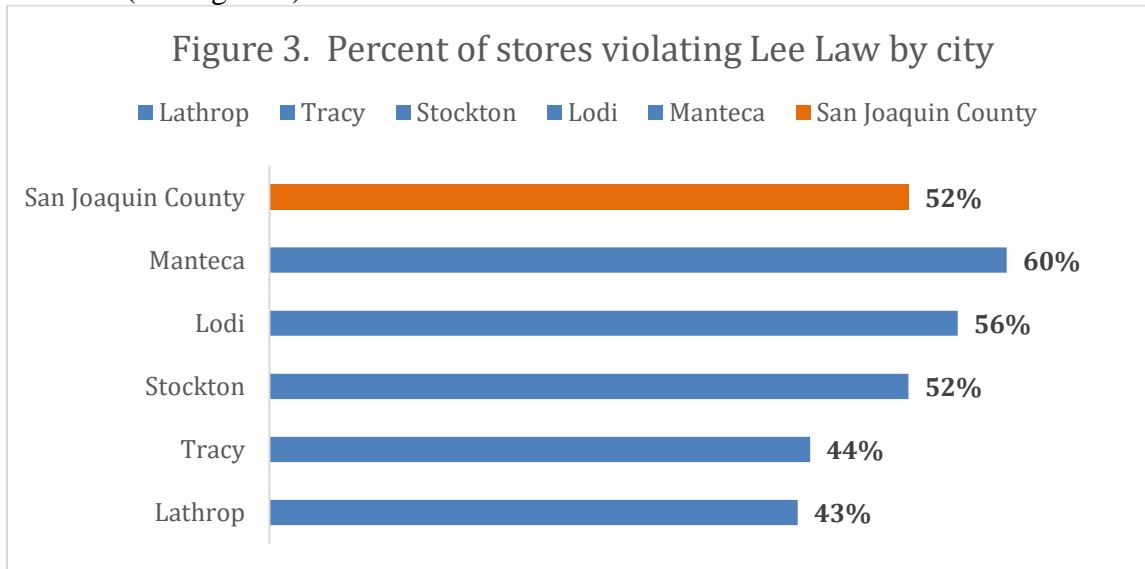
The HSHC observation data showed that slightly more than half of the stores in San Joaquin County had more than one-third of doors and clear windows covered by signs.

Observation data showed that **52% of stores** in the city of Stockton had more than 33% of doors and clear windows covered by signs.

Observational data in Stockton, which is the focus of this objective, showed that 52% of sampled stores had more than 33% of doors and clear windows covered by signs in 2016. Lee Law

¹¹ The evaluators honored the data embargo request, as release of the statewide findings would not be released until early March 2017.

violation in the four other cities surveyed in 2016 ranged from 42% in Lathrop to 60% in Manteca (see Figure 3).



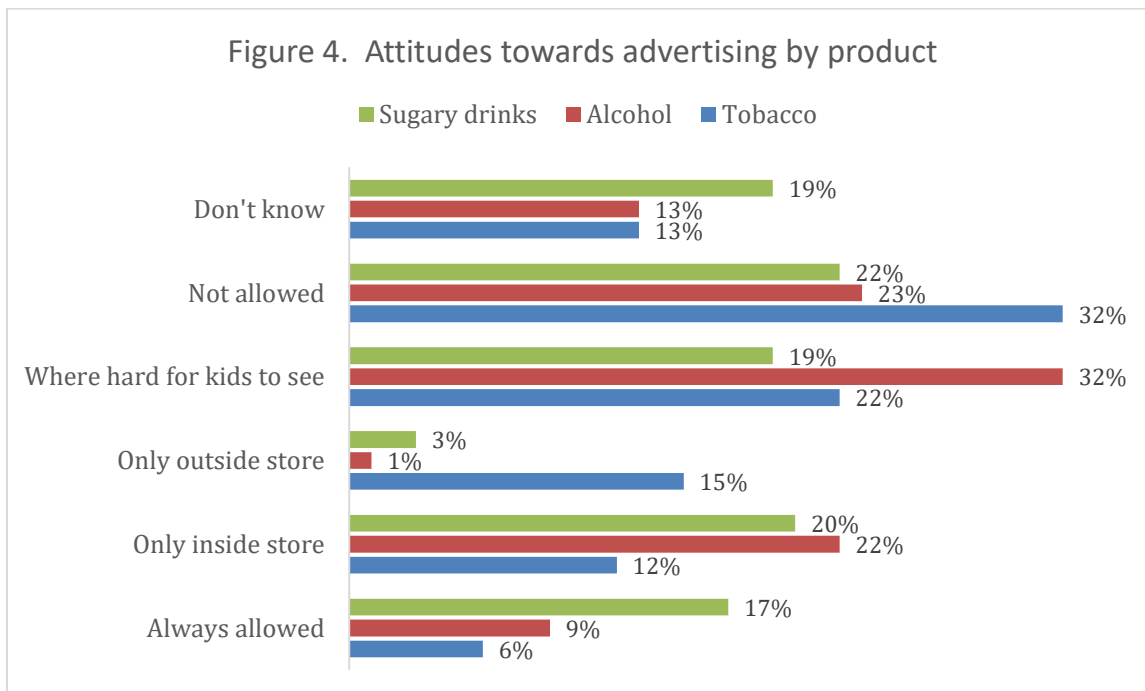
Given the high level of non-compliance with the Lee Law throughout San Joaquin County, STOPP used the rationale that if the larger City of Stockton adopted a 15% signage policy, there was potential that other cities in the county would adopt a 15% limit policy soon afterwards.

Throughout the three years of the intervention, the HSHC Subcommittee and STOPP staff met regularly to examine ways that Stockton's policies could be modified to include a signage policy and to develop criteria for a Healthy Retail Recognition Program. The Subcommittee obtained outdoor signage policies from Local Lead Agencies in Santa Clara and Modoc Counties, and a sample signage and advertising policy from ChangeLab Solutions. They also spoke with San Diego and Los Angeles Counties to learn about their efforts to institute a retail recognition program. By the end of 2016, the HSHC Subcommittee had made recommendations on existing Stockton policies and developed healthy retail criteria that included compliance with the Lee Law. Local code enforcement was then contacted to discuss their capacity to enforce a local Lee Law ordinance. The code enforcement office agreed to meet with STOPP staff, but was unable to do so before the end of 2016.

The HSHC Subcommittee was also tasked with updating and educating STOPP Coalition members about the campaign. A presentation on the Lee Law and dangers of tobacco marketing was made to the STOPP Coalition in November 2016. STOPP kept coalition members and community partners informed throughout the grant on the intervention progress via quarterly e-blasts that included program updates, the latest tobacco research and resources, and upcoming trainings and webinars. STOPP staff also met with three retailers in the fall of 2016 to discuss the Lee Law policy, and as a result, all three removed unhealthy signage from their windows and doors.

Public Opinion

Public Intercept Surveys were conducted from September 2, 2016 to October 14, 2016, with 271 respondents. Participants were asked 33 questions related to their opinions on the ease of buying tobacco, alcohol, and other foods and beverages; restricting the sale of certain tobacco products; and their attitudes toward advertising in stores. As shown in Figure 4, approximately one-quarter of respondents felt that the advertising of tobacco, alcohol, and sugary drinks should not be allowed at all and nearly one-third (32%) would not allow tobacco advertising. An average of 11% felt that the advertising of tobacco, alcohol, and sugary drinks should always be allowed, and only 6% felt that tobacco should always be allowed. About one-quarter indicated that advertising should be allowed, but only where it was hard for children to see, and one-third felt particularly concerned about alcohol advertising.



*For tobacco, response option was “Limited to a small percentage outside of store”

In effect, three-quarters of respondents (74%) felt that tobacco, alcohol, and sugary drink product advertising should be disallowed or that its placement should be controlled. Furthermore, when asked, “Would you support or oppose a law that makes it illegal to cover more than 15% of their windows with advertisements?”, 55% said they would support such a law, 21% opposed, and 24% did not know. Given the uncertainty about the 15% signage limit among one-quarter of the respondents, it seems evident that it is important to raise public awareness about both enforcing the existing Lee Law and the rationale for public safety and community aesthetics associated with reducing allowable signage to 15% (see FER Appendix 3 for full results).

The need for greater public awareness and education was also emphasized by the Key Informant Interviews. Together, these results provided the impetus for STOPP to collaborate with the NAACP to sponsor a Men’s Health Breakfast to raise awareness of the impact of tobacco and tobacco advertising in communities of color.

Key Informant Interviews

Key Informant Interviews were conducted in September 2016, with two women and three men who represented diverse and influential sectors of the County: a police sergeant, a storeowner, a school board member, a city planner, and a Stockton City Councilmember. The interviewees were asked for their opinion regarding the relationship between the health crisis in San Joaquin County and the sale and advertising of unhealthy foods, beverages, and alcohol; the role of government in making stores healthier; their opinion on several tobacco control policies; the use of a healthy store rating system; and the practice of financial incentives to create healthier stores.

Results

While most respondents understand that there is a connection between the saturation of unhealthy foods, advertising and poor health, they also believe that these unhealthy products are necessary to the economic viability of small businesses, and that small businesses are vital to the economy of local neighborhoods. This strongly influences their opinion about the role of government and any proposed action to improve the retail environment. While most felt that government did have a role to play in improving the retail environment, most had strong reservations due to concerns over the impact this might have on store profits and independence. While none of the key informants were aware that 55% of sampled stores in San Joaquin County violated the Lee Law, the Councilmember expressed that there is a need to educate the Stockton policy makers, and very likely the community, about the Lee Law.

Support for possible tobacco control policies

The participants were asked if they would support or oppose seven possible tobacco control regulations. As shown in Figure 5 and Table 4, most of the key informants supported regulating vaping devices, a retail license policy, preventing stores near schools from selling tobacco, banning tobacco sales by pharmacies, and making the sale of small amounts of tobacco illegal. However, the majority opposed banning price discounts on tobacco and banning the sale of flavored tobacco products (see FER Appendix 4 for full results). The police sergeant pointed out two important issues: 1) that revenues from a retail license law be used as intended, and 2) that it would be very difficult to enforce the sale of small amounts of tobacco. These are important concerns that will need to be addressed in any future efforts to propose these policies for City Council adoption.

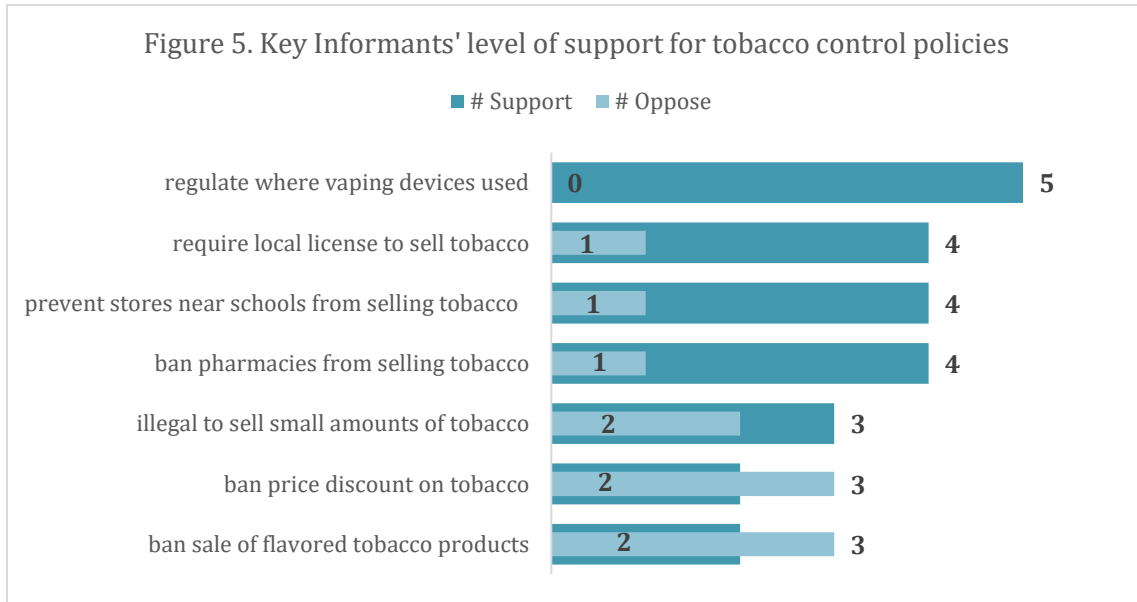


Table 4. Comments on support for possible tobacco control policies

Key Informant

“Vaping is the biggest scam. People act like it is socially acceptable. I am not buying the safety claims by industry.”

City Council Member

“I am not a supporter of extra regulations on businesses. These owners have overhead. We would have to be sure the revenues from the licensing fees are spent properly. If it is not guaranteed then no I would not support this.”

Police Sergeant

“From a law enforcement perspective, we cannot enforce this type of law (sale of small amounts of tobacco) often or well. If I cited a store for selling single cigarillos, the District Attorney’s office would not have time to prosecute such an ordinance violation. It would take more city resources than would benefit the community. “

Police Sergeant

Overall, respondents felt that there would be medium to good community support (mean 3.80) for these types of ordinances. Again, there were concerns that local ordinances will affect the income of local stores owners and in turn local tax revenues. All of the respondents felt that there would be support from elected officials for policies that create healthier retail environments. They all noted that community involvement will be needed. The City Councilmember noted that the city council has already shown its willingness to makes policies that increase access to healthy beverages, as evidenced by the recent policy adopted to offer healthier drinks in kids meals.

The participants were also asked about their level of support for a rating system that might serve as motivation for stores to sell healthier foods and beverages and/or a system for providing financial aid, tax credits, and other benefits that would reward the reduction in the sale of tobacco and alcohol and increasing the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables. Overwhelmingly, respondents seemed more inclined to support incentive programs rather than healthy store certification.

When asked if advertising of tobacco, alcohol, and unhealthy food and beverage products should be allowed in stores, three participants said it should not be allowed at all and two said it should be allowed but only in places that are hard for children to see. However, the police sergeant expressed his belief that limiting store advertising would reduce profits, and hurt the community economically – clearly an issue that must be addressed if a policy is to succeed.

Greatest barriers to regulating retail environment

Finally, key informants were asked for their opinion on the greatest barriers to regulating retail tobacco, alcohol, food and beverage sales and/or advertising. The respondents expressed concerns about laws that restrict sales and may hurt business, loss of tax revenue, loss of employment, and the overall effect on small retailers.

Table 5. Greatest barriers to regulating retail environment	Key Informant
<i>There are different barriers. If we do not sell alcohol and tobacco products in the stores, then where are we going to get tax base for some of the school programs that we have? However, I believe that if we banned all the tobacco and liquor sales we would not have the homeless people living in the streets.</i>	School Board Member
<i>As a policymaker, I need to consider what laws may hurt the business owners. You don't want to hurt someone's ability to make a living. Additionally, we are a free country and I feel strongly against cigarettes but we don't want to dictate what people can and can't buy if it is a legal product. Advertising should be limited to protect the kids.</i>	City Council Member
<i>Employment is a big one. Store owners go into business not to get rich but if you take away things they can sell then it will not be worth for them to stay in business. It would be great to get rid of tobacco and alcohol but we can't do that, and if we start giving away jobs we are missing the mark.</i>	Police Sergeant
<i>The stores want to make money and so with more regulations they are not going to be too happy. We are going to need the store owners' cooperation. They need incentives. Restricting or punishing will not be effective. People will still buy the cigarettes and alcohol.</i>	City Planner
<i>Our store is close to the homeless shelter in Stockton. They need more housing. This is a much more important issue in Stockton than tobacco.</i>	Store Owner

Clearly, the recent bankruptcy experienced by the City of Stockton has created a more cautious environment when it comes to improving local retail environments. This will need to be addressed in any future campaign to influence or pass tobacco policies.

Sharing Results

Summary findings from the Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community (HSHC) Observational Survey were shared with the STOPP Coalition members and with the community via a March 2017 press release. The public opinion survey finding showing that at least half of those surveyed support a 15% signage limit was shared with the STOPP Coalition. Similarly, the key informants' opinions on various tobacco control policies and their preference for a healthy retail incentives program were also shared with the STOPP Coalition.

The NAACP/STOPP Men's Health Breakfast/Town Hall - A Turning Point

Summary findings from the HSHC survey were also shared with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)-Stockton Branch's Health Committee. This resulted in the NAACP agreeing to partner with STOPP to host a Men's Health Awareness Breakfast/Town Hall on June 10, 2017. The purpose of this event was to disseminate the results of the HSHC Campaign and to reach out and seek input from a typically hard-to-reach population: men of color. The event included four speakers that addressed three priority areas covered in the HSHC survey: tobacco marketing and availability, sexual health, and nutrition. Following these presentations, participants broke into small groups to discuss and provide input on each of the topics. At the end of the event, participants completed an evaluation survey.

The event was highly successful, accomplishing several important goals for STOPP. It served to solidify a strong new partnership with the NAACP as well as generate interest among community members about tobacco marketing and availability. Participants were particularly concerned about the impact this was having on youth. Potential champions for future tobacco policy work were also identified, with attendees from the National Football League (NFL) expressing interest in advocating for some of these issues. Results from the evaluation showed that the topics were relevant to participants, and that they felt they learned new information that they would use in the future. The event overall received a very high rating (4.5 out of 5), and participants expressed strong interest in attending more forums like this in the future (see FER Appendix 5 for full results). Finally, the breakfast laid the groundwork for a new partnership with the African American Tobacco Leadership Council and The LOOP, who were brought in as guest presenters. These partners could play an important role in helping STOPP to build momentum and convert community interest into action in the future.

CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

While STOPP's goal of adopting a City of Stockton ordinance to reduce the coverage of store windows with any type of advertising to no more than 15% of window space was not achieved in this time period, significant progress was made in laying the groundwork not only for a window signage policy, but also for policies that could influence how and where tobacco is sold in San Joaquin County. Changing hearts and minds in a political environment that is historically known for "status-quo" priorities takes time and cultivation of new and diverse partnerships. During this past project period, the STOPP program implemented strategies that included:

- Increasing and diversifying its coalition membership,
- Developing educational materials for policy makers and the community,
- Engaging youth in anti-tobacco educational and policy activities,
- Researching policies related to retail stores certification and incentive programs,
- Identifying sample signage laws from other municipalities,
- Collaborating with the county's NEOP to educate retailers about the HSHC observation survey and the Lee Law,
- Working with stores owners that voluntarily removed their signage to comply with the Lee Law and the *Refresh San Joaquin* efforts, and
- Partnering with the NAACP to inform and engage men of color in Stockton to take action to reduce the impact of tobacco in their communities.

The time necessary for conducting the above activities to build capacity prevented the STOPP staff from proposing to the Stockton City Council policies for limiting window space to no more than 15%. However, the HSHC survey store data on unhealthy advertising and Lee Law non-compliance, combined with the public intercept survey and key informant opinions opposing tobacco and alcohol sales and advertising, supporting limited signage, and preferring retail store incentives to create healthier stores, provide STOPP with a strong foundation for achieving future healthy communities efforts.

Indeed, information gleaned from the key informants can be interpreted as recommendations for future strategies. For example, key informants felt that the community and policy makers will support efforts to create healthier stores, but concerns about the impact on retailer profits, local tax revenues, and loss of employment must be addressed. In addition, one person stated that any retail license policy promoted by STOPP in the future will need to have guarantees that the fees will be spent properly (e.g., enforcement). Based on this information, it will be important to educate both the community and policy makers on the public safety and aesthetic reasons for the proposed 15% limit. Finally, the key informants recommended establishing a system of retail store financial incentives, as a more effective alternative to a healthy store certificate program or bans on sales of products such as flavored tobacco and tobacco price discounts. They also recognized that proposing policies before the city council for healthier stores should not overlook the low-income areas of South Stockton. Unfortunately, the city council person who participated in the key informant interviews and seemed supportive of policy changes to create healthier stores was not reelected in November 2016. However, there is a fresh opportunity offered by

Stockton's newly elected mayor. He is an African American who grew up in South Stockton and founded the Reinvent South Stockton Coalition in 2014 while serving as the area's city council member. STOPP is a member of the Reinvent South Stockton Coalition. This coalition developed the South Stockton Promise Zone and identified nine indicators of success. One of them is to address the high levels of child obesity found in South Stockton, a concern very consistent with the efforts of San Joaquin County Public Health Services, and its partners, to create healthier stores and tobacco free environments.^{12,13,14} In 2017, STOPP's efforts to advocate before the city council show more promise, as the South Stockton city council member was elected mayor in November 2016 to a 4-year term. Together with the Reinvent South Stockton Coalition, the NAACP and with youth organizations that are interested in addressing social justice issues in their communities, STOPP has built a solid foundation on which future policies and systems changes can be made to reduce and eliminate tobacco use in San Joaquin County.

¹² South Stockton Promise Zone (SSPZ) Plan.

[http://www.sjcphs.org/Disease/documents/20161104_South%20Stockton%20Promise%20Zone%20\(SSPZ\)%20Plan%209-28-16.pdf](http://www.sjcphs.org/Disease/documents/20161104_South%20Stockton%20Promise%20Zone%20(SSPZ)%20Plan%209-28-16.pdf)

¹³ Reinvent South Stockton Facebook site: <https://www.facebook.com/reinventsouthstockton/>

¹⁴ The Community Health Assessment Core Planning Group. San Joaquin County 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment. Available at <http://www.healthiersanjoaquin.org/pdfs/2016/report%20narrative.pdf>