

PRESS RELEASE

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MINORS EDUCATE, ADVOCATE AGAINST UNDERAGE SALES OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JACKSON, Michigan (June 18, 2015) – Local teens are out to buck the stereotype of minors buying alcohol and tobacco. This summer, they'll descend upon area retailers with information on how to stop underage purchases. It's an educational effort spearheaded by the Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition (JCSAPC).

"One of the coalition's goals is preventing the access and availability of tobacco, alcohol and other drug products to underage youth," said Linda Marks, JCSAPC member. "Engaging young people to get the word out is a powerful way to draw attention."

In 2014, 9.1 percent of tobacco retailers sold to youth in the Mid-South Region, according to the Michigan Department of Community Health Youth Tobacco Sales Rate, Synar report. This statistic underscores the need to educate the community on the risks of selling tobacco and alcohol to minors, Marks said.

JCSAPC is teaming up with local youth to visit the county's alcohol and tobacco retailers this summer. The youth will provide a packet containing all required signage and educational materials, discouraging alcohol and tobacco sales to minors. Vendors will be counseled on what to do if someone underage tries to buy and the consequences of selling.

In Jackson County, JCSAPC volunteers will visit 163 tobacco retailers and 144 alcohol vendors. Each retailer will receive a one-on-one visit from Jackson area youth and an adult chaperone. Packets will include: legal age-limit signs; the new Michigan license identification information; materials to educate their employees about the proper sale of tobacco and alcohol; and information on fines and policies regarding the sale of alcohol and tobacco to underage youth. The packets are free of charge to retailers.

"JCSAPC appreciates the continued support of Jackson County alcohol and tobacco retailers and the community to uphold the integrity of state and federal laws," said Marks.

More information about:

- Resources in Jackson County include: providing smoking cessation resources to include the Michigan Tobacco Quit Line at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669), smoke-free worksite regulation and alcohol and tobacco prevention programming."
- *Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition* and its activities, please contact Ravenn Moore at (517) 796-5133 or via email at rmoore@uwjackson.org

Our efforts are funded through Mid-State Health Network (MSHN), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

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