



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Survey Shows Continued Compliance Prohibiting Sale of Tobacco to Minors

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – For the 16th consecutive year, West Virginia has been in compliance with federal requirements that limit retail sales of tobacco to minor youth, based on an annual statewide survey conducted by the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities (BBHFF). The findings indicate that 92.0 percent of retailers inspected did not sell tobacco products to youth under the age of 18 during 2015.

“The partnership between the Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities, the West Virginia State Police and BBHFF grantees reduces the availability of tobacco products to youth,” said Vickie Jones, Commissioner of BBHFF. “I am proud of our teamwork and commend the retailers and employees who contribute to the State’s tobacco prevention efforts by not selling tobacco products to youth under the age of 18.”

The Synar Survey, named for its sponsor, Congressman Mike Synar of Oklahoma, was enacted as part of the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration Reorganization Act. The results are based on annual inspection results.

Federal law authorizes the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant and requires states to enact and enforce laws prohibiting sales of tobacco products to minors. The state must demonstrate that its non-compliance rate does not exceed the target of 20% for illegal tobacco sales to minor youth in order to maintain \$3.5M in prevention and treatment funds. SAPT, the largest funding stream in West Virginia supporting substance abuse prevention and treatment, is administered by the Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities.

West Virginia’s 2016 Synar report is available for public comment at <http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/bhhf/resources/Pages/default.aspx>.

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