

Charleston, WV, November, 2013

West Virginia continues to be in compliance with Synar Requirements (the ADAMHSA Reorganization Act (P.L. 102-321) in limiting retail sales of tobacco to minor youth, according to the WVDHHR, Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities.

The 2014 Annual Synar Survey of West Virginia retail tobacco outlets showed that 85.7% of retailers complied with the law barring tobacco sales to anyone under the age of 18. The survey was completed in cooperation with the West Virginia State Police and WVDHHR/BHHR grantees.

The Synar program began in 1997. The national average since the inception of the program is 9.1%. However, West Virginia youth still report that it is easy to obtain tobacco products from stores and from other sources such as an older friend, sibling, or parent.

Federal law authorizes the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant and requires states to enact and enforce laws designed to reduce the availability of tobacco products to youth under the age of 18. The state is required to conduct annual Synar compliance inspections using a scientific random sample study protocol approved by the federal Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), and must demonstrate that its non-compliance rate does not exceed the target of 20% for illegal tobacco sales to minor youth. The SAPT Block Grant, administered by WVDHHR/BHHR, is the single largest funding stream in West Virginia supporting substance abuse prevention and treatment. Failure to comply with the target of a 20% Retailer Violation Rate (RVR) would mean the loss of **\$3.5M** in prevention and treatment funds.

Funded with federal Substance Abuse Prevention & Treatment (SAPT) block grant funds administered through the West Virginia Department of Health & Human Resources/Bureau for Behavioral Health & Health Facilities, **See Red?** Retailer Education material was provided to all eligible retailers in the state. The retailer education material consists of two flyers (for display purposes), a brochure, and stickers for registers to remind clerks of the law.

There are a number of reasons not to sell tobacco products to youth under the age of 18. **ITS AGAINST THE LAW!** We don't want retailers to get in trouble. It's harmful to the health of youth. And, West Virginia could lose **\$3.5M** annually in federal block grant dollars to fund treatment and prevention services should state-wide non-compliance be more than 20%.

To see a copy of West Virginia's 2014 Synar report, please visit www.dhhr.wv.gov/bhhf/resources/Pages/DADA_Resources.aspx.