

**NEWS from the N.D. Department of Human Services  
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**Survey shows drop in tobacco sales to minors**

BISMARCK, N.D. - The North Dakota Department of Human Services reported today that tobacco sales to minors decreased this past year. Violations fell to 5.8 percent in the annual random survey of tobacco retailers.

Department research analyst Elizabeth Cunningham said, "We conducted 56 more compliance checks than the previous year, and there were 16 violations statewide – two fewer than last year."

She said officials at the North Dakota Department of Human Services are pleased with the findings. "Tobacco usage by minors is concerning because of its health impact and connection to other high risk behaviors," she said. "We encourage retailers to continue to check identification."

Minors working under the supervision of adults made 277 attempts to purchase tobacco products from licensed vendors across the state, Cunningham said. Minors were instructed to answer honestly if asked about their age.

Records show that North Dakota has made significant progress addressing the sale of tobacco to minors. Prior to 2000, the state's noncompliance rate exceeded 50 percent.

Cunningham said it is important for North Dakota to keep up the good work. Federal law requires states that receive federal Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant funding to conduct the annual scientific survey of licensed tobacco retail sites. If violations exceed 20 percent, states risk losing up to 40 percent of the block grant funding.

Last year, the North Dakota Department of Human Services received \$5.1 million from the block grant. The funds were used for public substance abuse treatment through the department's eight regional human service centers.

Survey results are available on-line on the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Division's publication page at [www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/abuse.html](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/abuse.html).

For information about the compliance check, which is independent of other local compliance activities, contact Elizabeth Cunningham, research analyst, N.D. Department of Human Services, at 701-328-8705.

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