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CONTACT: Dr. Sharon Harris 516- 676-2008

safeglencove@yahoo.com

SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: The Truth About Placement of Tobacco Products and Youth Susceptibility

According to a recent report from The Truth Initiative, point-of-sale marketing encourages impulse purchases and increased sales of tobacco products. It is not surprising that tobacco companies strategically place their products front and center, making them easy for customers to see. They frequently do this by entering into contractual agreements with retailers that receive financial incentives in return for the placement of tobacco products in highly visible locations around the counter. These incentives help those stores price their tobacco products lower than competitors.

In most retail stores, the cashier counter is the best place for advertising and is where impulse buying is encouraged since customers must stop there before leaving. Tobacco companies use this to their benefit and place their products and ads strategically around checkout counters to ensure the most exposure and stimulate impulse purchases of their products. For example, in California, 85% of stores have marketing materials for tobacco products within four feet of the counter and nationally, 85% of tobacco shelving units and 93% of tobacco displays are in the counter zone.

While the tobacco industry acknowledges that products and advertising should be placed at adult eye level to avoid young children being exposed, about one-third of stores have low-height interior tobacco ads. In New York City, 37.2% of cigarette, cigar, smokeless tobacco, and e-cigarette advertisements were placed at a height lower than three feet. While the Tobacco Control Act requires cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products to be placed behind the counter, this does not apply to other tobacco products. Products like little cigars and e-cigarettes, which often come in youth-appealing flavors, are not subject to the behind-the-counter restriction and may be placed on countertops in tobacco retailers where they are visible and easily accessible to youth. A study of tobacco retailers found that more than half of retailers (52.3%) placed e-cigarettes in front of the counter, on top of the counter, or in multiple locations, while only 47.7% placed them exclusively behind the counter. Additionally, 13.6% of the tobacco retailers, all convenience stores, placed e-cigarettes next to candy.

Placement of tobacco products at the point-of-sale affects impulse purchases made by adults. One study used a virtual convenience store to create scenarios in which the tobacco product display was either fully visible or enclosed behind a cabinet (display ban). Compared with adult recent quitters in the fully visible tobacco product display conditions, adult recent quitters in the display ban condition had lower urges to smoke. Additionally, compared with adult current

smokers in the fully visible conditions, adult current smokers in the display ban conditions were less likely to attempt to purchase cigarettes in the virtual store.

Keep aware, stay informed and avoid unhealthy behaviors. “Live SAFE”. The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition works diligently to protect youth and inform parents through prevention education to avoid the negative consequence of nicotine addiction.

SAFE, Inc. is the only alcohol and substance abuse prevention, intervention, and education agency in the City of Glen Cove. It’s Coalition is concerned with all combustible and electronic products with tobacco. The Agency employs environmental strategies to educate and update the community regarding the negative consequences of smoking and vaping. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or to learn more about electronic products visit the Youth and Tobacco Use and Vaping Facts and Myths Pages of SAFE’s website to learn more about how vaping is detrimental to your health at www.safeglencove.org.

The Truth Initiative is the nation’s largest nonprofit public health organization dedicated to preventing youth and young adult nicotine addiction and empowering quitting. Research is conducted through the Truth Initiative Schroeder Institute that produces independent research to provide evidence for policy change and leadership in cessation research. For more information, please visit www.truthinitiative.org.