

# Merchant Education Programs: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly

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Winston-Salem  
Raleigh  
NC-TTA



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## Session Overview

- Identify successful components of a comprehensive approach to reduce youth access to tobacco products.
- Develop and sustain rapport with the retail industry.
- Discuss Development of Retail Training/Education Programs.
  - Value of Retail Training Programs.
  - Types of Programs.
  - Components of a Successful Program.
  - Implementation



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## What Research Tells Us Regarding Youth Access

- Any attempt/effort to reduce youth access to tobacco needs to be comprehensive and include the following components;
  - Mandatory participation by all tobacco retailers,
  - Designating and agency in the state with clear responsibility for enforcement,
  - Providing adequate, guaranteed funding for enforcement,
  - Licensing of vendors by the enforcement agency,
  - Engage in frequent and realistic compliance checks,
  - Impose meaningful penalties (fines, suspensions, revocation),
  - No preemption of local ordinances,
  - Education and awareness efforts for retailers and the general public.
    - Stead, L & Lancaster, T. "A Systematic Review of Interventions for Preventing Tobacco Sales to Minor," Tobacco Control 9:169-176, Summer 2000.



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## Developing Rapport with Retailers

- Work with ALE to promote their trainings/educational meetings for retailers and their employees.
  - Items we need to understand...
    - Youth tobacco trends, and usage patterns
    - Economic costs to the State and local community to include health care costs,
    - State/Federal Laws
    - Available resources
    - Typical store safety issues (lighting, landscaping etc.),
    - Third party sales
    - Advertising and look-alike packaging patterns and placement.



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## Developing Rapport with Retailers

- Be respectful of their time.
  - Use Current NC Merchant Training Protocols (Discussion)Go in fully educated and understanding of your position on underage tobacco usage and youth access to tobacco.
- Allows you to listen with an informed ear.
  - Be alert for, and identify, themes.
- Not there to educate the person about underage tobacco use, but should they ask for information be prepared to share relevant literature and schedule another time to discuss the materials after they have had an opportunity to review them.



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## Developing Rapport with Retailers

- Be pleasant – Turn on the Charm.
  - Only real goal: To be certain you are heard.
  - If what you have to say is overshadowed by the way in which you say it, valid points and positions will never be heard.
  - Don't give individuals the opportunity or permission to ignore and dismiss you.
    - Where appropriate consider having a youth volunteer join you – It is hard for retailers to be impolite when a youth is present.
    - Youth can also explain that their peers do not want to use tobacco products.
  - It is okay to leave uninviting or unsafe circumstances; simply document your efforts.



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## Developing Rapport with Retailers

- The meeting (one-on-one).
  - Introduce yourself and re-state why you've asked to meet; thank them for their time.
  - Create a friendly and safe conversation that flows well and appears natural.
  - Learn about them and their feelings about underage tobacco usage.
  - Listen for stories that tell you more.
  - Seek to know their self-interests, what motivates or interests them.



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## Developing Rapport with Retailers

- Treat them with respect.
  - Distinguish local retailers from National Tobacco Industry.
  - They are vested members of your community selling a legal product – avoid demonizing them. The objective is to create an ally not an enemy.
    - Appreciate cultural differences.
    - In many cultures smoking is an acceptable practice.
    - Attempts to persuade them should be based on the science and facts and should be devoid of emotion and anger.



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## Developing Rapport with Retailers

- Identify their needs.
  - Ask how you can help them to be more successful as a community partner.
    - In many instances retailers are open to suggestions on how to improve their processes and systems.
    - Additionally, they may have useful suggestions that could assist other retailers.



## Types of Merchant Education Programs - Providers



### State or local programs.

State Alcohol & Tobacco Beverage Agencies.  
 DMH/Developmental Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services.  
 Local Health Departments.  
 Local Police/Sheriff's Department.



### Industry Funded Programs.

"We Card" – The messenger matters– what is their motivation



## Merchant Education programs and Awareness Efforts

- A 2010 study found that the “We Card” program was designed not to reduce youth tobacco use, but rather to;
  - Improve the industry’s image,
  - Reduce the threat of additional regulation and,
  - Undermine enforcement of existing laws.
    - Apollonio, DE & Malone, RE, “The ‘We Card’ Program: Tobacco Industry ‘Youth Smoking Prevention’ as Industry Self-Preservation,” American Journal of Public Health, 100(7):1188-1201, July 2010

**\*\*\*This is not a supported approach in NC!**



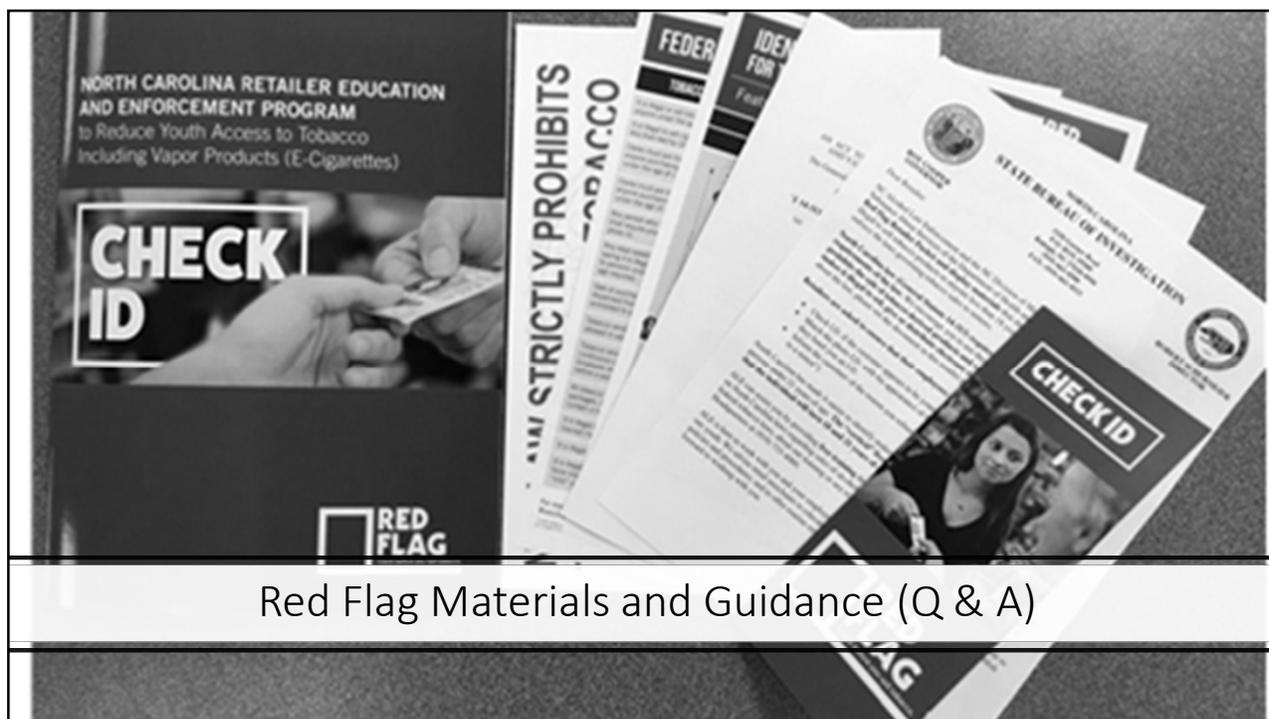
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## Merchant Education Programs and Awareness Efforts

- Tobacco industry funded initiatives are not the answer!
  - In 2012 the Surgeon General concluded that the tobacco companies’ youth smoking prevention programs, which include youth access initiatives. “ have not demonstrated an impact on the initiation or prevalence of smoking among young people”.
  - HHS, Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General, 2012, [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/dat\\_statistics/sgr/2012/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/dat_statistics/sgr/2012/index.htm).



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## Red Flag Materials and Guidance (Q & A)

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## Types of Merchant Education Programs – Delivery Method



### **In person.**

Advantages – Instructor can answer nuanced questions, role playing can occur, can incorporate different learning styles.

Disadvantages – Time, cost, transportation.



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## Types of Merchant Education Programs – Delivery Method

- Computer Based.
  - Advantages – available 24 hours a day, **potentially** less expensive over time.
  - Disadvantages – initial start up costs, not everyone has access to a computer, not everyone is computer savvy, accountability, inability to deal with nuanced issues.
  - Who owns the program?
  - Who will update and how often?



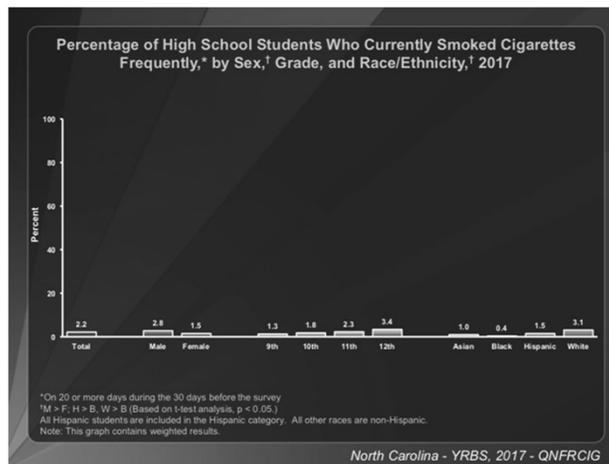
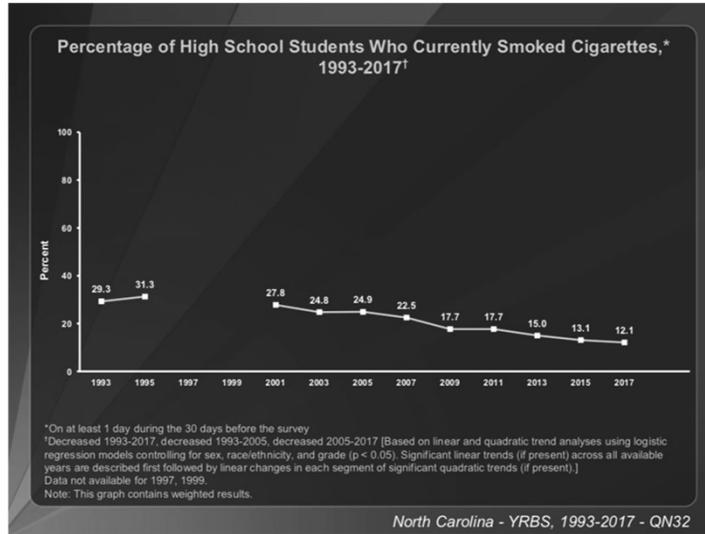
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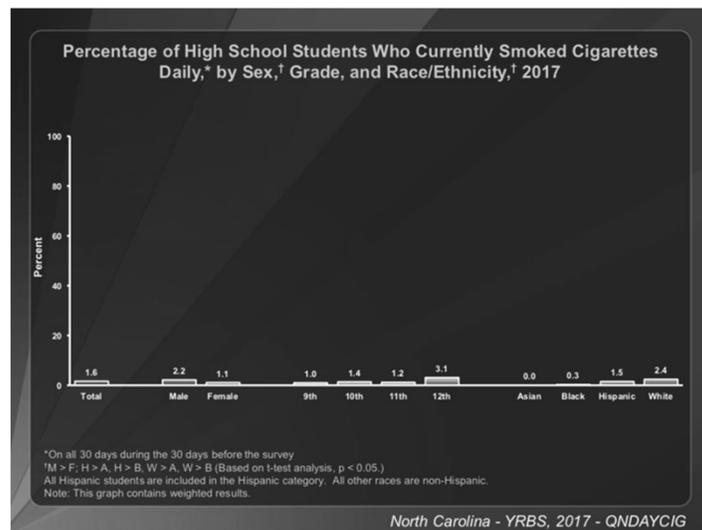
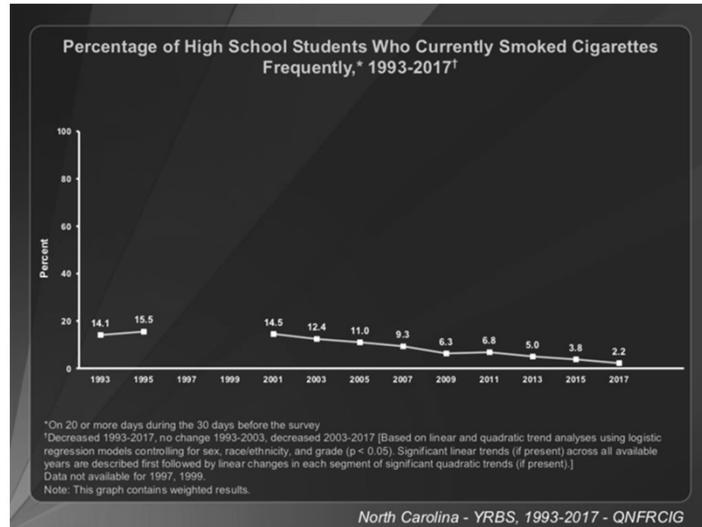
## Question?

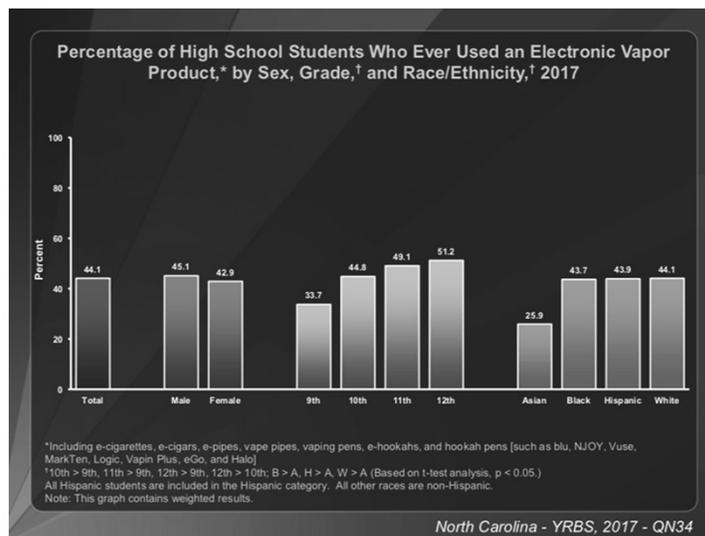
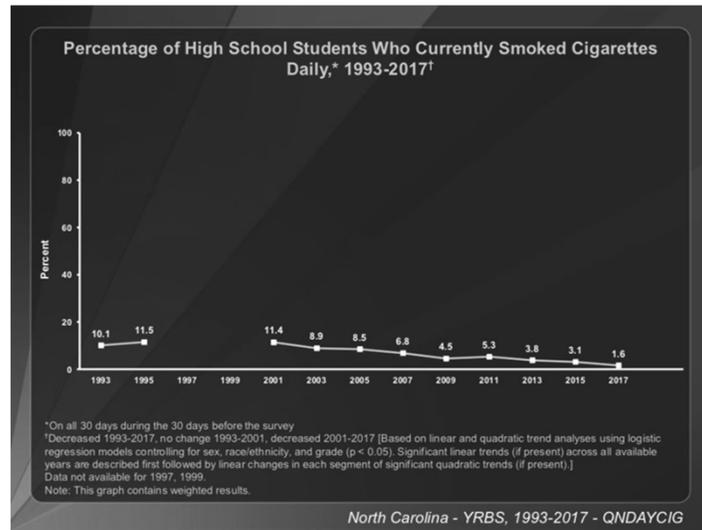
- According to the NC Youth Survey what percentage of high school students in 2017 reported current usage of vape products?
  - A.) 28.8%
  - B.) 16.9%
  - C.) 29.7%
  - D.) 16.8%

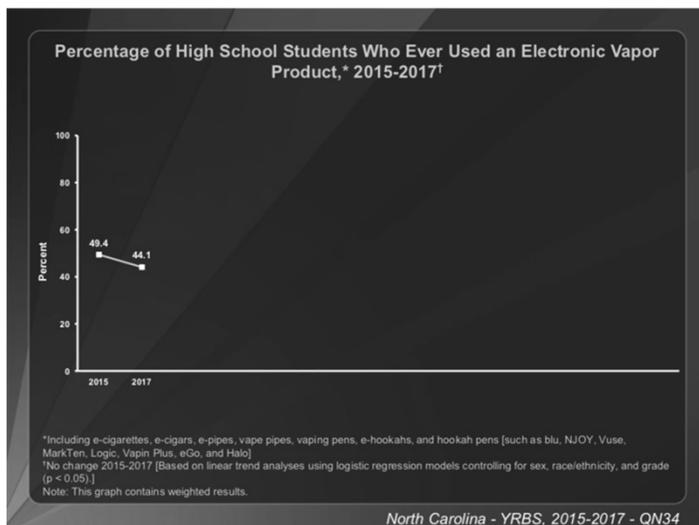


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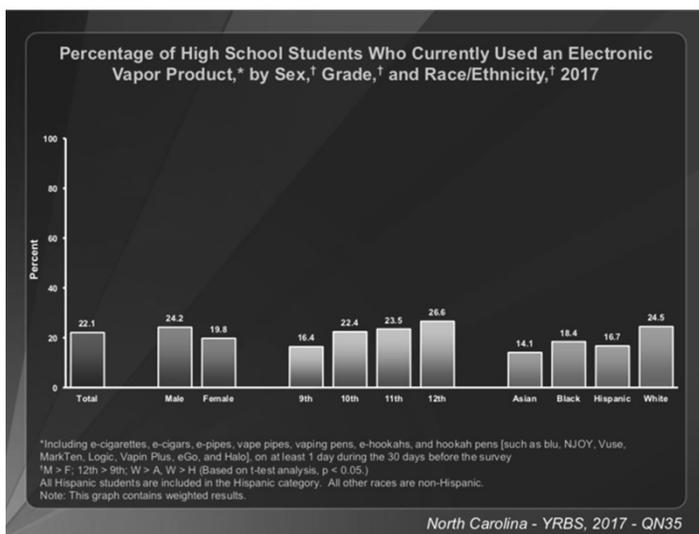




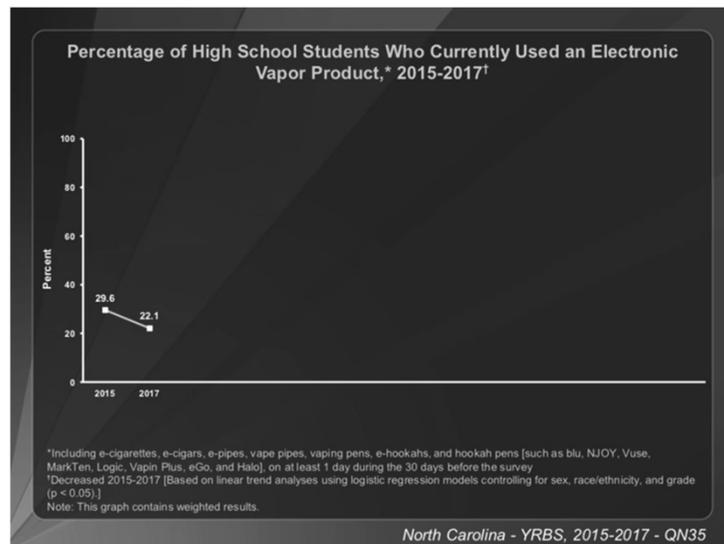




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## Additional Supports for Comprehensive Programs

- Review of State tobacco laws.
  - Discuss openly and factually the potential penalties.
- Review of Federal tobacco laws.
  - FDA authority.
  - Potential FDA penalties.
  - Resources FDA/CTP website.
    - Center for Tobacco Products – Office of Compliance and Enforcement
      - Webinars, guidance documents, data.
      - <https://www.fda.gov/about-fda/office-medical-products-and-tobacco/about-center-tobacco-products>

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## Question?

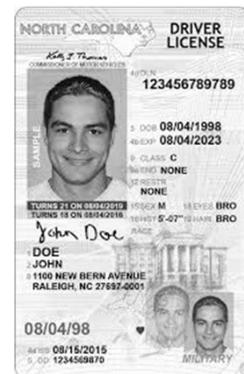
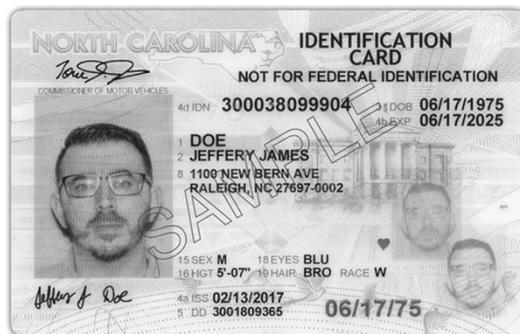
- Under “The Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act” a North Carolina clerk that sells tobacco product to a 16 year old is subject to the following potential sanctions from the FDA?
  - A.) A summons for the misdemeanor sale of “tobacco products” to a minor which can trigger a maximum fine of \$1000.00 and 60 days in jail.
  - B.) Mandatory Server training
  - C.) All of the above
  - D.) None of the above



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## Question?

- A North Carolina Driver’s License that is horizontal in format indicates that the subject was under the legal age to purchase alcohol & tobacco products at the time their license was issued
  - A.) True
  - B.) False



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## Question?

- Under North Carolina General Statute 14-313 the failure to post a warning sign regarding the prohibition of the sale of tobacco products to anyone under the age of 27 is an infraction and punishable by an automatic fine of \$25.00 for a first offense.

- A.) True
- B.) False

**N.C. LAW STRICTLY PROHIBITS THE PURCHASE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS, TOBACCO-DERIVED PRODUCTS, VAPOR PRODUCTS, AND CIGARETTE WRAPPING PAPERS BY PERSONS UNDER THE AGE OF 18. PROOF OF AGE REQUIRED.**

[N.C. G.S. 14-313 (B)]



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- Consult with your legal advisor to answer your questions and to obtain legal advice.



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