**SYNAR - Merchant Education Guidance**

*Identify, contact and visit tobacco retail outlets to provide information and materials (brochures, signs, Red Flag Merchant Education packet) on youth access to tobacco laws.*

*Best Practice Steps*

**Planning**

1. Prevention providers will determine the number and location of all tobacco retail outlets including over-the-counter and vending machines in the area(s) served using DMH provided lists.
2. Prevention providers will ensure the person who talks to merchants (adult volunteers, staff or youth etc.) is knowledgeable and well versed in youth access laws and Red Flag materials.

**Implementation**

1. Prevention providers will contact tobacco retail outlets in their area(s) to ensure they have received specific information (i.e. Red Flag Merchant Education packet) on their responsibilities and the penalties for violation of state and federal youth access laws.
2. Prevention providers, if applicable, will partner with community youth groups to visit tobacco retail outlets in their area(s) to provide information and materials (i.e. brochures, signs) on state youth access law.
3. On the day of the visit, prevention providers and/or volunteers will wait for an opportunity to speak to the most responsible person on duty (suggested visit hours are between 10 am-2 pm).
4. Prevention providers and/or volunteers will introduce themselves and state the purpose for the visit (to educate about youth access laws and to offer free Red Flag materials).
5. Prevention providers and/or volunteers will conduct a brief 1-3 minutes conversation with the employee (or manager, if available) about the following information:

* NC state law sign posting (if not immediately visible)
* Reminder that NC law makes it illegal to sell, give or distribute electronic or e-cigarettes to anyone under the age of 18
* Checking ID for anyone purchasing tobacco products that appears to be under the age of 27. When checking for an ID:
* Ask for a valid form of identification such as a driver’s license, state ID card, military ID or passport
* Ensure the picture matches and birth date states they are over the age of 18.
* Promote the free, online ALE training available (and give the person the Be A Responsible Seller/Server [BARS] training information)

1. Prevention providers and/or volunteers will encourage the Manager/Assistant Manager/Owner, if available, to:

* Ensure tobacco products are not easily accessible and/or available to youth
* Educate themselves on state and federal tobacco laws
* Establish policies and procedures for selling tobacco products and encourage every employee to read and sign the policies before they start selling tobacco products
* Offer routine employee training in order to help employees comply with the NC law that includes detecting fake IDs, refusing sales to minors and penalties for violating the law

1. Prevention providers and/or volunteers will consider reporting violations as necessary to ALE or FDA. Issues of concern/violations include stores selling loosies, no state signs posted, tobacco products by the cash register etc.
2. Prevention providers will use the merchant tracking tool in ECCO to update merchant information in the merchant dashboard.
3. Prevention providers will use ECCO to enter information from each merchant visit in the merchant tracking tool under Part 1 Merchant Education Visit. If there is no internet service available while in the field, the prevention provider should fill out a NC Tobacco Merchant Education Form and transfer the information into Part 1 once back to a computer.
4. Prevention providers will visit retailers on a periodic basis to promote relationship building and ongoing prevention efforts and to encourage ongoing adherence to youth tobacco access laws.

**Evaluation**

Reach: Count merchants trained and the 12-17-year old in your merchant education catchment area, if done comprehensively

Suggested collection of process evaluation information, including:

* Number of tobacco retail outlets identified
* Number of contacts with tobacco retail outlets
* Number of materials disseminated
* Number of youth group partnerships