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Champaign-Urbana Public Health District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CUPHD Finds Local Tobacco Vending Practices that Increase Youth Smoking Rates

Champaign County, IL – The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD) is releasing a report this month with findings that tobacco vending in Champaign County is more heavily concentrated in certain areas, and that a number of vendors have practices that make smoking more appealing to youth. Retail tobacco practices have a direct impact on the number of smokers, and how many youth begin smoking.

The Champaign County tobacco vendor survey found that:

- Tobacco vendors are more likely to be located near schools in low income areas;
- More than half of local teens live near a tobacco vendor;
- Tobacco products attractive and accessible to youth are more prevalent in certain villages, with the highest number in Mahomet;
- Tobacco vendors are more concentrated in certain villages, with the highest density in Thomasboro.

These vendor practices have been shown to increase smoking rates among low income people, youth, and the general population.

Because smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the US, with tobacco killing one in five people, public health advocates recommend reducing tobacco vendor practices that make smoking more likely. These recommendations include: reducing tobacco advertising inside and outside stores, reducing the number of tobacco vendors, raising tobacco prices, moving tobacco products out of reach of children, removing flavored tobacco products that appeal to youth, and not selling tobacco near candy, toys, or schools.

Tara McCauley, CUPHD Special Projects Coordinator, said, “Our research into local tobacco vendor practices demonstrates that our community needs to do more to prevent the disease and death caused by smoking. CUPHD hopes that we can take action locally to reduce the attractiveness of smoking when adults and youth frequent local businesses.”

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CUPHD had assistance with its report from the GIS and Spatial Analysis Lab at the University of Illinois (UIUC) College of Veterinary Medicine, and CUPHD also used data from the Illinois Youth Survey from the UIUC Center for Prevention Research and Development.

CUPHD's tobacco prevention project is part of the Illinois Department of Public Health's Tobacco Free Communities initiative.

For more information:

www.c-uphd.org/tobacco.html

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