

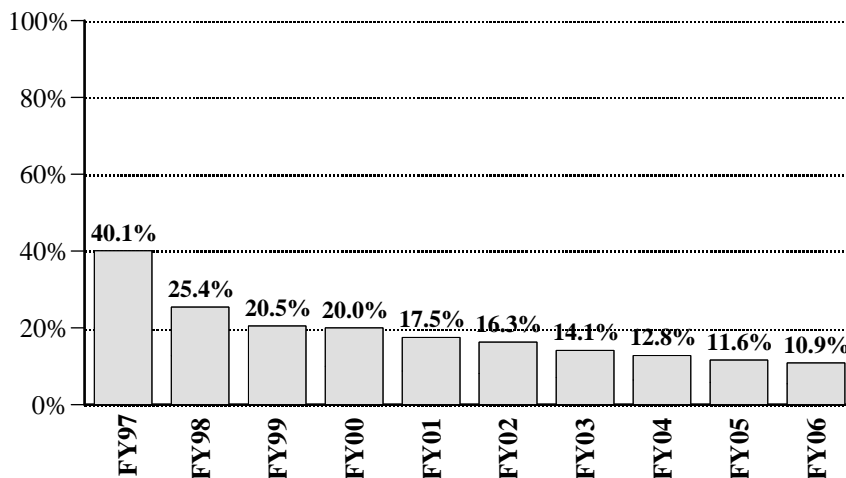
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Random Compliance Checks Find Tobacco Sales to Minors Have Reached an All-Time Low

“States have made significant progress in enforcing youth tobacco access laws and in reducing the percentage of retailers who sell tobacco products to minors,” according to SAMHSA’s recently released report, *FFY2006 Annual Synar Reports: Youth Tobacco Sales*. The Synar Amendment requires states to have laws prohibiting the sale of tobacco products to those younger than 18 and to conduct annual random, unannounced inspections of a valid sample of tobacco retailers to ensure compliance with these laws. The average national retailer violation rate (RVR) from these inspections has decreased steadily over the past 10 years, from 40.1% in FY97 to a low of 10.9% in FY06 (see figure below). Furthermore, FY06 is the first year that all States and the District of Columbia were in compliance with all Synar regulatory requirements and met the federally established RVR target of 20% or less. Individual State RVRs ranged from 2.2% in Arkansas to 19.2% in Kansas. The report notes that States with low RVRs generally have tobacco access control programs that are “well coordinated and include an array of strategies, such as targeted merchant and community education, media advocacy, and use of community coalitions to mobilize community support for restricting youth access to tobacco” (p. 7).

National Weighted Average Tobacco Retailer Violation Rate (RVR), FY97 to FY06



NOTES: Tobacco retailer inspection years are in Federal Fiscal Years (from 10/1 to 9/30). National retailer violation rates (RVRs) were calculated by weighting each State’s reported RVR by that State’s population.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from SAMHSA, *FFY 2006 Annual Synar Reports: Youth Tobacco Sales*, 2007. Available online at <http://download.ncadi.samhsa.gov/Prevline/pdfs/sma07-4300.pdf>.

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