



Public Health
Division

County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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Press Release

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Bilingual Ad Campaign Exposes Dangers of Flavored Tobacco Products

Santa Cruz County, CA -- Looks Like Candy. Tastes Like Candy. Kills Like Tobacco. That's the message Santa Cruz County residents will see in English and Spanish on busses, movie screens, and a Freedom Boulevard billboard, beginning this week. The ads are part of a public health campaign about the dangers of flavored tobacco products.

"Products like e-cigarettes, little cigars, and smokeless tobacco use sweet flavors like cherry, chocolate and mint to appeal to youth," said Andrea Solano, Project Director of the The Santa Cruz County Tobacco Control Program. "Flavors mask the harsh taste of the tobacco and keep kids smoking long enough to get them hooked."

According to the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 80% of young people who have ever used tobacco started with a flavored product.

"The tobacco companies know that smokers who start at a young age are more likely to develop a lifelong nicotine addiction," Solano explained. "Candy and fruit-flavored products, with their colorful packaging and low prices, are designed to create a new generation of tobacco users."

The bilingual ad campaign is designed to educate parents, youth, health professionals and local policy makers about this public health threat. It is sponsored by the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency with funds generated by Propositions 99 and 56, taxes on the sale of tobacco products. The ads direct viewers to the Tobacco Education Coalition website at www.SantaCruzHealth.org/Tobacco for more information, including tips for parents on talking to their teens about flavored tobacco products.

"Public awareness is a critical first step to preventing another generation of young people from living with a lifetime of addiction," said Tara Leonard, a Health Educator with the Health Services Agency. "Hopefully these ads will start a conversation not only among family members but throughout our community."



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