

A Point of Sale Pilot Study of Erie County Tobacco Retail Outlets

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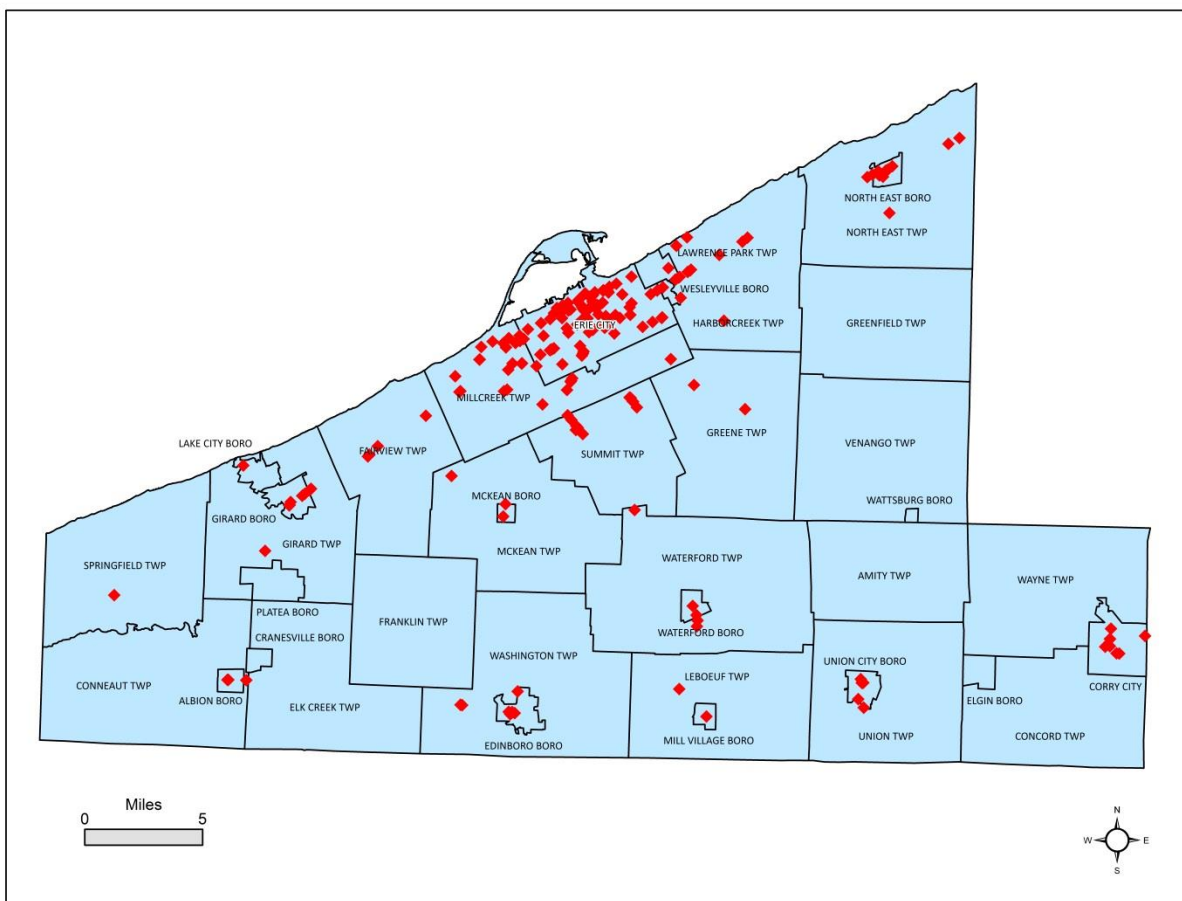


Background: Tobacco companies heavily and effectively market their products at tobacco retail outlets. To combat the negative effects of these marketing practices, it is essential to document how tobacco products are actually marketed in the local retail store environment.

The Erie County Department of Health (ECDH) initiated a point of sale pilot study in January, 2018 as a collaborative project between the Health Promotion & Quality Improvement, Epidemiology, and Environmental Health Services Divisions. Trained ECDH personnel completed in-person assessments of Erie County tobacco retail stores using the Standardized Tobacco Assessment for Retail Settings (STARS) inspection tool. This report summarizes the results from the pilot and highlights several key findings. A full compilation of the STARS data is presented in the two tables at the end of this report.

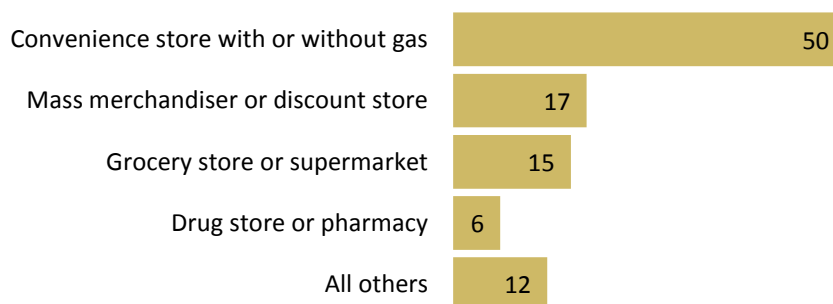
- Working from a Pennsylvania Department of Revenue master list of 351 licensed tobacco retail outlets located in Erie County, ECDH staff completed 206 store assessments in the four month period from February 12 to June 19, 2018. Additionally, 92 other stores on the master list were found to be out of business, or currently did not sell tobacco products.
- The approximate locations of the 206 assessed retail stores are shown in Figure 1. Assessments were completed in 26 of Erie County's 38 municipalities. From an overall numbers perspective, 87 (42%) of the assessments were in the City of Erie, 27 (13%) were in Millcreek Township, and 92 (45%) occurred in the other 24 municipalities.

Figure 1. Locations of Tobacco Retail Store Assessments in Erie County



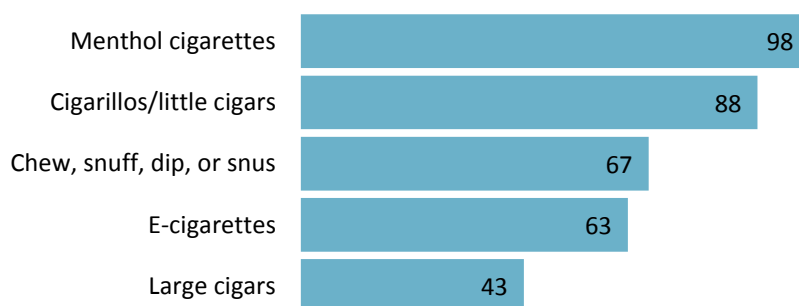
- 50% of the 206 inspected retailers were convenience stores.

Type of Tobacco Retail Store (%)



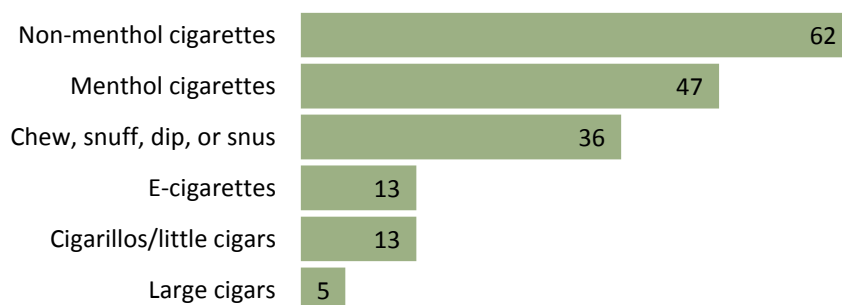
- Tobacco products were visible to the customer in 98% of stores. Only 1 retailer did not sell cigarettes.

Tobacco Products Sold at Stores (%)



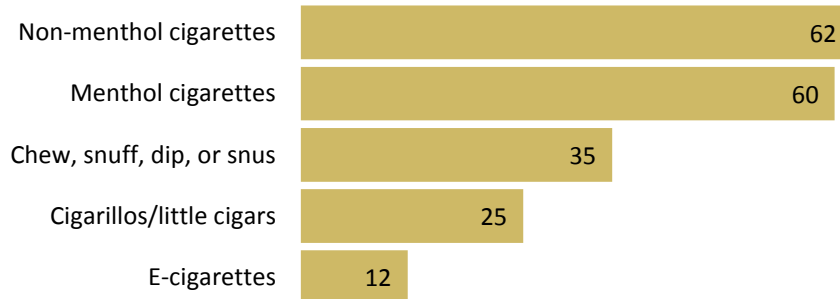
- 71% of retailers accepted SNAP (food stamp) benefits, and 16% sold alcoholic beverages. Remarkably, only 2% of stores displayed a graphic health warning sign.
- Non-menthol and menthol cigarettes were the products most frequently advertised outside the retail store (62% and 47%, respectively). Just over one-third of retailers advertised chew, snuff, dip, or snus (36%).

Products Advertised Outside the Store (%)



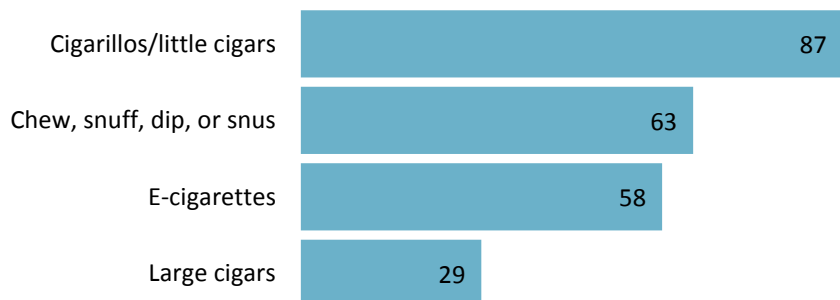
- Non-menthol and menthol cigarettes were the products most frequently marketed with price promotions (62% and 60%, respectively).

Product Price Promotions (%)



- 87% of stores sold flavored cigarillos/little cigars, and 58% sold flavored E-cigarettes. Also, 78% of retailers advertised cigarillos/little cigars for less than \$1, and 65% sold singles.

Flavored Products Sold at Stores (%)



- Cigarettes and cigarillos/little cigars were the products most frequently advertised at a child's eye level within 3 feet of the floor (8% and 5%, respectively).
- E-cigarettes and cigarillos/little cigars were the products most frequently placed within 12 inches of toys, candy, gum, slushy/soda machines or ice cream (9% and 6%, respectively). It should also be mentioned that a single convenience retail chain was responsible for 15 out of the 18 instances where E-cigarettes were sold within 12 inches of toys, candy, gum, slushy/soda machines, or ice cream.

Products Placed Near Youth Merchandise (%)

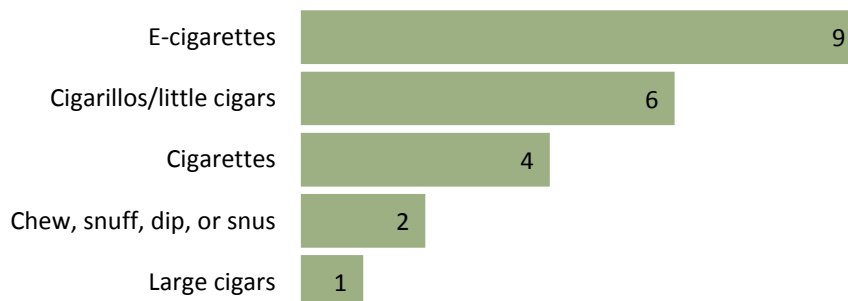


Table 1. Erie County Tobacco Retail Store Characteristics and Cigarette Data

	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Tobacco retail stores with completed assessments	206	100
Type of store		
Convenience store with or without gas	103	50
Mass merchandiser or discount store	35	17
Grocery store or supermarket	30	15
Drug store or pharmacy	13	6
Beer, wine, or liquor store	7	3
Tobacco shop	1	1
Other (e.g., private social club, restaurant/bar)	17	8
Store characteristics		
Tobacco products visible to customers	201	98
Has a pharmacy counter	22	11
Sells alcoholic beverages	32	16
Displays at least one graphic health warning sign	4	2
Accepts WIC benefits	37	19
Accepts SNAP benefits	136	71
Sells cigarettes	205	100
Sells non-menthol cigarettes	202	98
Cigarettes within 12 inches of toys, candy, gum, slushy/soda machines, or ice cream	9	4
Cigarette advertisement within 3 feet of the floor	16	8
Has cigarette price promotions	125	62
Has menthol cigarette price promotions	122	60
Tobacco products advertised outside the store		
Non-menthol cigarettes	127	62
Menthol cigarettes	93	47
Cigarillos/little cigars	24	13
Large cigars	10	5
Chew, snuff, dip, or snus	73	36
E-cigarettes	26	13
Notes: Missing/unknown data were excluded from percent calculations		
WIC - Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children		
SNAP - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps, EBT)		

Table 2. Cigarillos/Little Cigars, Cigars, Smokeless Tobacco, and E-cigarette Data

	Cigarillos/little cigars		Large cigars		Chew, snuff, dip, or snus		E-cigarettes	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Store characteristics								
Sells product	182	88	89	43	138	67	129	63
Sells flavored product	179	87	59	29	129	63	118	58
Sells singles	133	65						
Product advertisement for less than \$1	159	78						
Product within 12 inches of toys, candy, gum, slushy/soda machines, or ice cream	13	6	2	1	4	2	18	9
Product advertisement within 3 feet of the floor	10	5	2	1	1	1	1	1
Has self-service display	1	1	4	2			2	1
Has product price promotions	51	25			71	35	24	12
Cross-product promotion with cigarettes					5	3	0	0

Note: Missing/unknown data were excluded from percent calculations