

What is Synar?

Named after former Oklahoma congressman Mike Synar, who sponsored the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration Act in 1992, Synar is a program that was created to reduce tobacco access and availability to minors across the United States and its territories through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

SAMHSA requires that states do the following:

- Create laws that prohibit any manufacturer, retailer or distributor of tobacco products from selling or distributing those products to anyone under the age of 18
- Enforce these laws
- Commit to annual, unannounced checks on tobacco retailers where children are allowed
- Submit an annual report discussing activities about how they enforce the law

Why is Synar important?

Synar is important because it plays a lead federal role in substance abuse prevention. This includes requiring states to reduce the efforts of minors to purchase tobacco to 20% or less. Indiana's violation rate was 14.4% in 2018 thanks to Synar regulations, and the state aims for its lowest rate, which was 5.3% in 2010 and 2012. Additionally, research also shows that the enforcement of youth access laws through the Synar program is directly responsible for a portion of the decline in youth smoking.

With the increased interest among youth in electronic cigarettes, Indiana starting to include them in the Synar inspections in 2017. The Synar inspections completed in 2018 showed that retailers sold the products to minors 14.3% of the time and the only higher violation rate was for traditional cigarettes at 16%.

What is even more interesting is retailers were less likely to ask for ID when e-cigarettes were being purchased than for any other tobacco product.

What can we do?

Active enforcement of youth tobacco access laws are an important component of tobacco prevention programs and lead to fewer youths smoking. All efforts to reduce youth tobacco access should be combined with other efforts to reduce youth tobacco use.

We need to:

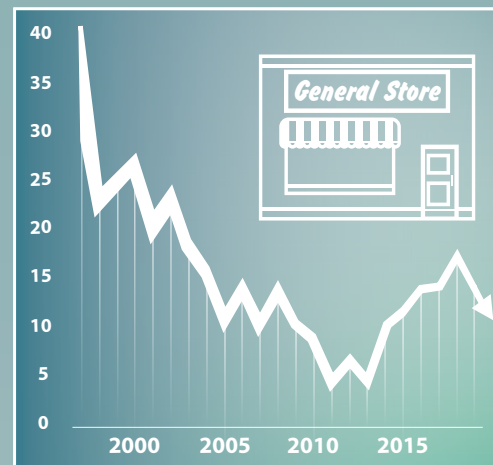
- Mobilize communities to reduce minors access by implementing local efforts
- Boost retailer education, which includes letters and packets to all establishments along with training opportunities.

Synar

IS SYNAR EFFECTIVE?

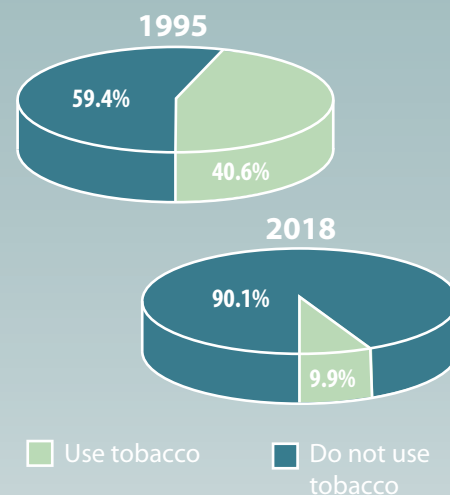
Indiana Retailer Violation Rate

Data was collected from the Indiana annual Synar reports



Students using tobacco

Data was collected through the Indiana Youth Survey of 12th graders



For more information, visit us at:
<https://www.samhsa.gov/synar>



Division of Mental Health and Addiction