



## Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency

*Healthy People, Healthy Communities*

**Susana Wilson**  
Interim Director

1120 S. Dora St.  
Ukiah, CA 95482  
Ph.: (707) 472-2600  
Fax: 472-2335



**Adult and Older Adult  
System of Care**

Susan Era, Director  
747 S. State St.  
Ukiah, CA 95482  
(707) 463-7900  
(707) 463-7979



**Children and Family  
System of Care**

Mary Elliott, Director  
860 N. Bush St.  
Ukiah, CA 95482  
(707) 463-5481  
(707) 463-4043



**Community Health  
Services**

Stacey Cryer, Director  
1120 S. Dora St.  
Ukiah, CA 95482  
(707) 472-2600  
(707) 472-2773



**Administrative Offices**

Staff Resources  
Pat Meek, Manager  
(707) 463-7722

Fiscal  
Doug Gherkin, Chief  
Financial Officer  
(707) 463-7882



Date: 2/4/2010

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Mary Williamson, Tobacco Control Program  
Mendocino County Health and Human Services  
Phone: 707-472-2695  
Email: [williamm@co.mendocino.ca.us](mailto:williamm@co.mendocino.ca.us)

### Press Release

#### American Lung Association Report Card: Mixed Results in Mendocino County

The American Lung Association (ALA) in California issued 2009 local tobacco control grades for 373 cities and unincorporated areas in 34 of California's 58 counties in January 2010. Local grades are awarded in three categories: smoke-free air, smoke-free housing and reducing sales of tobacco products. These three grades are averaged for one overall local tobacco control grade.

Mendocino County was one of the 34 counties included the 2009 Report Card. This "snapshot in time" is intended to reveal how well selected counties and cities are doing compared to other local jurisdictions throughout the state. The unincorporated areas of Mendocino County received an overall tobacco control grade of "F," but the cities fared somewhat better, especially Ukiah ("C").

Mary Williamson, Project Director of the Mendocino County Tobacco Control Program, while anticipating a low grade for the smoke-free air and smoke-free housing categories, areas in which she says work is just in the beginning stages here, points out that Mendocino County should have



## Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency

*Healthy People, Healthy Communities*

**Susana Wilson**  
Interim Director

1120 S. Dora St.  
Ukiah, CA 95482  
Ph.: (707) 472-2600  
Fax: 472-2335



**Adult and Older Adult  
System of Care**

Susan Era, Director  
747 S. State St.  
Ukiah, CA 95482  
(707) 463-7900  
(707) 463-7979



**Children and Family  
System of Care**

Mary Elliott, Director  
860 N. Bush St.  
Ukiah, CA 95482  
(707) 463-5481  
(707) 463-4043



**Community Health  
Services**

Stacey Cryer, Director  
1120 S. Dora St.  
Ukiah, CA 95482  
(707) 472-2600  
(707) 472-2773



**Administrative Offices**

Staff Resources  
Pat Meek, Manager  
(707) 463-7722

Fiscal  
Doug Gherkin, Chief  
Financial Officer  
(707) 463-7882



received a higher grade in the category of reducing sales of tobacco products. She pointed out that Mendocino County does have a tobacco retailer licensing ordinance aimed at reducing sales of tobacco to minors. Williamson says she contacted the ALA, who acknowledged that the ordinance was overlooked. Williamson praised the Cities of Ukiah and Willits, both of whom have similar ordinances, who both received "A's" in this category. Willits adopted a tobacco retailer licensing ordinance in 2003, unincorporated Mendocino County in 2004 and Ukiah in 2005.

### Effective Tobacco Retailer Licensing

The adoption of tobacco retailer licensing ordinances by jurisdictions in Mendocino County has made a big difference in local tobacco buy rates. Williamson reported that in a recent underage tobacco buy survey, late October 2009, 89 out of 105 (85%) of tobacco retailers did not sell tobacco to minors. This is a considerable improvement over a countywide buy rate of 56% in 2002. The City of Fort Bragg, which does not currently have a tobacco retailer licensing ordinance, has maintained higher buy rates (receiving an "F" from the ALA). Fort Bragg had a buy rate of 21% in 2009, while the City of Willits had a buy rate of 14% and the City of Ukiah had a buy rate of 12%.

While buy rates have been reduced where ordinances are in place, the underage tobacco buy surveys show that the availability of tobacco to minors is a continuing problem in Mendocino County. More than 80% of all smokers began their road to addiction before they turned 18 and were legally allowed to purchase tobacco products. Keeping tobacco out of the hands of minors is an important measure to help prevent them from embarking on a lifelong addiction.



## Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency

*Healthy People, Healthy Communities*

**Susana Wilson**  
Interim Director

1120 S. Dora St.  
Ukiah, CA 95482  
Ph.: (707) 472-2600  
Fax: 472-2335



**Adult and Older Adult  
System of Care**

Susan Era, Director  
747 S. State St.  
Ukiah, CA 95482  
(707) 463-7900  
(707) 463-7979



**Children and Family  
System of Care**

Mary Elliott, Director  
860 N. Bush St.  
Ukiah, CA 95482  
(707) 463-5481  
(707) 463-4043



**Community Health  
Services**

Stacey Cryer, Director  
1120 S. Dora St.  
Ukiah, CA 95482  
(707) 472-2600  
(707) 472-2773



**Administrative Offices**

Staff Resources  
Pat Meek, Manager  
(707) 463-7722

Fiscal  
Doug Gherkin, Chief  
Financial Officer  
(707) 463-7882



### How does a County get an "A"?

One tobacco retailer licensing ordinance, however, is insufficient to get an overall local "A" from the ALA. Cities and counties are graded on whether they have provisions in their county codes and/or city municipal codes that protect those who live, work and play in their jurisdictions against the harmful effects of tobacco. Individuals who would like to be involved in strengthening county and city codes in Mendocino County should contact Mary Williamson, Tobacco Control Program, 472-2695.

### What can the individual do about sales to minors?

For more than 100 years, it has been illegal in California to sell tobacco to anyone under the age of 18. If you see a tobacco retailer selling tobacco to a minor, call 1-800-5-ASK-4-ID and report it.