



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Thursday, September 29, 2016

For More Information:

Emily Skydel, 212-349-6460, ext. 1149
914-960-1136 (cell) eskydel@nypirg.org
Diana Fryda, 212-349-6460, ext 1109
347-742-6525 (cell) dfryda@nypirg.org

NYPIRG Releases “Still At Risk” Report Examining Tobacco Marketing in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Park Slope and Williamsburg, Brooklyn

Brooklyn, NY - The New York Public Interest Research Group Fund (NYPIRG) today released a report highlighting the continued prevalence of tobacco products and e-cigarette marketing near high schools in three Brooklyn neighborhoods.

NYPIRG student volunteers and staff mapped tobacco advertisements and product displays they observed within a one to seven block area surrounding three high schools – Brooklyn Community Arts and Media High School in Bedford-Stuyvesant; Brooklyn Millennium High School in Park Slope; and Williamsburg Prep High School in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. The results were then compiled into an anecdotal report entitled *Still At Risk*.

“High school students and other youth are bombarded every day with ads for tobacco products and e-cigarettes,” said Emily Skydel, NYPIRG Project Coordinator. “Despite the progress that has been made in reducing youth exposure to tobacco, there is still more work to be done.”

Still At Risk found that thirty-seven stores in the examined areas of the three neighborhoods contained at least one tobacco advertisement or product display. **Surveyors observed a total of 251 tobacco advertisements and product displays within one to seven blocks surrounding the three high schools included in the project.**

“This was a very informative experience. I realized how many tobacco ads there are, both inside and next to candy and outside the store too,” said Nidah Sheikh, a Brooklyn College student and survey participant.

The full report can be found at:

http://nypirg.org/pubs/NYPIRG_REPORT-STILL_AT_RISK_Sept_2016.pdf

Additional findings in *Still At Risk* include:

- Surveyors observed 75 tobacco ads on the exteriors of store buildings.
 - Of the 75 total exterior ads, 20 ads were observed surrounding the Bedford-Stuyvesant high school, 18 ads were observed surrounding the Park Slope high school, and 37 ads were observed surrounding the Williamsburg high school.
- Surveyors observed 102 total tobacco ads on the interior of stores.

- Of the 102 total interior ads, 34 ads were observed surrounding the Bedford-Stuyvesant high school, 31 ads were observed surrounding the Park Slope high school, and 37 ads were observed surrounding the Williamsburg high school.
- Surveyors observed 74 total tobacco product displays on the interior of stores.
 - Of the 74 total tobacco product displays, 29 displays were observed surrounding the Bedford-Stuyvesant high school, 20 displays were observed surrounding the Park Slope high school, and 25 displays were observed surrounding the Williamsburg high school.

Tobacco remains the number one cause of preventable death in the United States.¹ While, cigarette advertisements have left billboards and TV commercials, they now bombard customers in local corner stores and bodegas, pharmacies, and other stores. Additionally, e-cigarette use is on the rise among high school students.²

Tobacco marketing is an especially significant issue when it comes to youth. According to a 2015 Youth Risk Survey Assessment of New York City High School students, 22 % of survey participants stated that they had tried smoking cigarettes, and 5.8% of survey participants stated that they had tried a cigarette within the past 30 days.³ The U.S. Surgeon General has found that the more tobacco advertising and marketing youth see, the more likely they are to smoke.

The U.S. Surgeon General has found that the more tobacco advertising and marketing youth see, the more likely they are to smoke.⁴ That's why it's troubling that there are over 9,000 licensed tobacco retailers in New York City and 75% of them have been found to be within 1,000 feet of a school.⁵ Whether it's a trip to the corner store for milk, a walk from the subway stop to school, or a stroll to the park, kids and teens are seeing tobacco marketing in alarming quantities.

ABOUT NYPIRG

The New York Public Interest Research Group Fund, Inc. (NYPIRG) seeks to empower, train and educate students and community members through organizing and advocacy efforts in order to solve significant problems affecting the health, environment, democratic institutions and quality of life for New York State's residents. Our principal areas of concern are environmental protection, consumer rights, higher education, government reform, voter registration, mass transit and public health. NYPIRG has a long and successful history protecting New Yorkers of all ages from the negative effects of smoking—from addressing tobacco marketing targeting youth to supporting smoke-free spaces. This project is 100% funded in the amount of \$9,000 by funding from The Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) – Partnerships to Improve Community Health Grant. www.nypirg.org.

--30--

¹U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014.

² Singh T, Arrazola RA, Corey CG, et al. Tobacco Use Among Middle and High School Students – United States, 2011–2015. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Re* 2016;65:261–367 DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6514a1>.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *1991–2015 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data*. Available at <http://nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline/>. Accessed on September 24, 2016.

⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2012.

⁵ Luke, Douglas A., PhD, et. al. "Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act: Banning Outdoor Tobacco Advertising Near Schools and Playgrounds." (*American Journal of Preventive Medicine*; 40(3): 295–302), 2011.