



Virginia Department of
Behavioral Health &
Developmental Services

CSB Onboarding Synar and Counter Tools

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Office of Behavioral Health Wellness



wellness:
Broadening Prevention

Synar/Tobacco History

- VA is a non-licensing state
 - One of 9 without tobacco/nicotine licensing
- Senate Bill 96 – 2014
 - Made it illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to purchase or possess vapor products
- Tobacco 21 – 2019
 - Changed the legal age for purchase or possession to 21
 - State law took effect July 1, 2019
 - Federal law took effect December 20, 2019

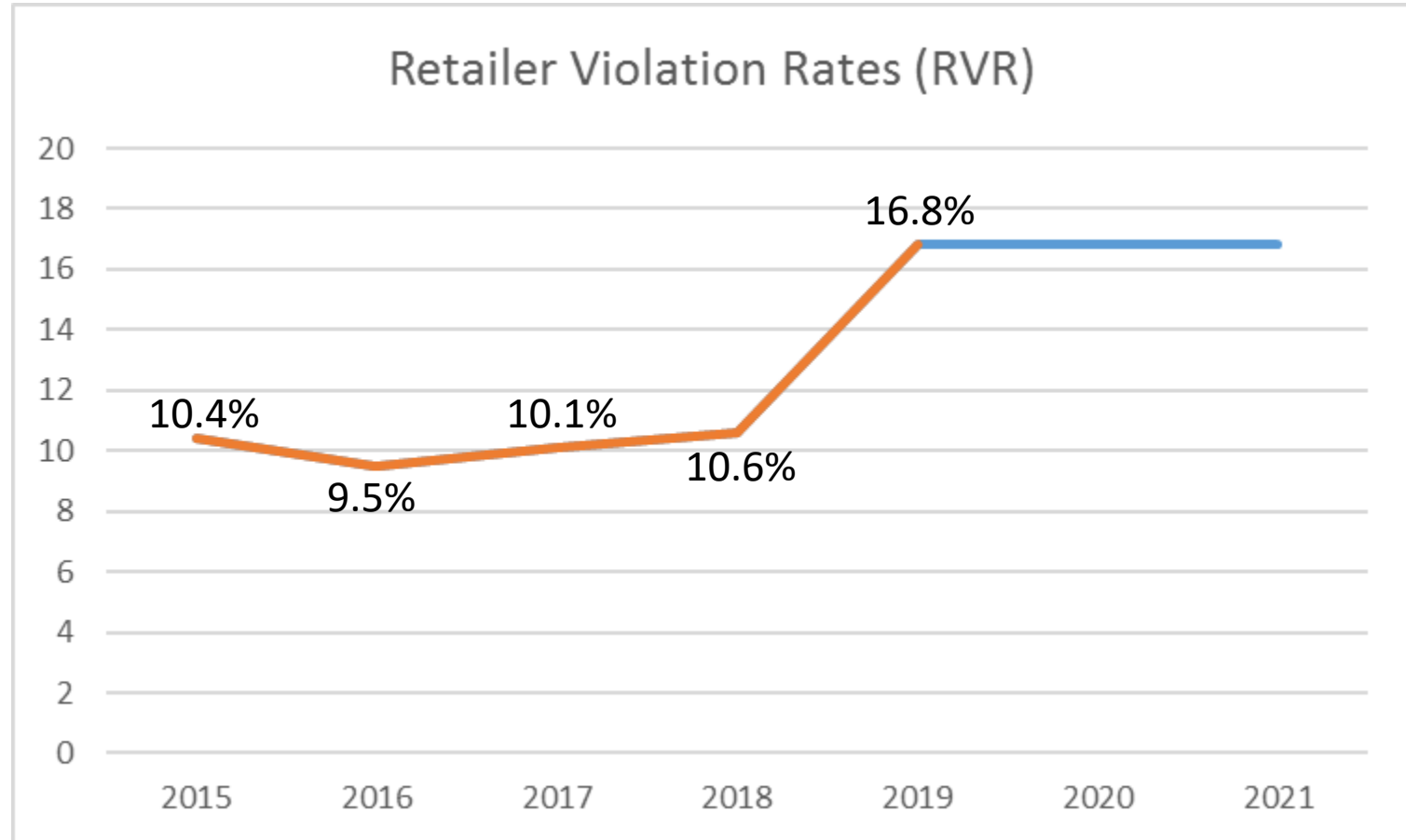
Synar in Virginia

Prohibiting the sale and distribution of tobacco products to people under 21

The regulation requires that states:

- Enact laws prohibiting any manufacturer, retailer, or distributor of tobacco products from selling or distributing such products to any individual younger than age 21
- Enforce these laws
- Conduct annual, unannounced inspections that provide a valid probability sample of tobacco sales outlets accessible to minors
- Achieve a noncompliance rate (RVR) of no more than 20% (noncompliance penalty of up to 10% of SAPTBG)

Retailer Violation Rates

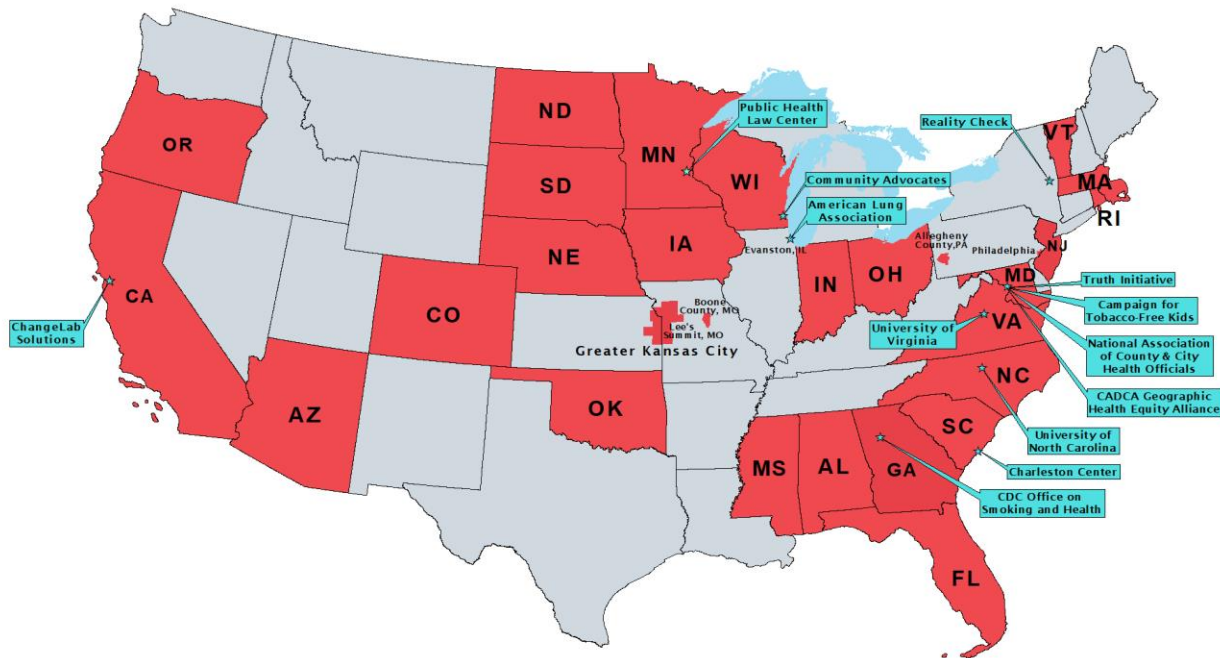


*No inspections were conducted in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic so the rate is considered to remain at 16.8%

Enforcement History

- Partner with Virginia ABC to conduct Synar inspections
 - Conducted on an annual basis
 - Results are what determine the State's RVR
- FDA Contract
 - Held by ABC until May 2018
 - Currently held by a third party contractor
- Inspections
 - Prior to May 2018, about 50% of retailers were inspected annually between FDA and Synar inspections
 - Since May 2018, only about 10% of retailers are inspected
 - FDA is doing some underage inspections but not to the level that they were when ABC held the contract.

Counter Tools



Elizabeth Gerndt
Virginia Project Director



Verify both listed and unlisted tobacco retailers

HOW?



By driving every primary and secondary road in the state.

Counter Tools Phase 2



Counter Tools POST



DASHBOARD

COLLECT

DATA ▾

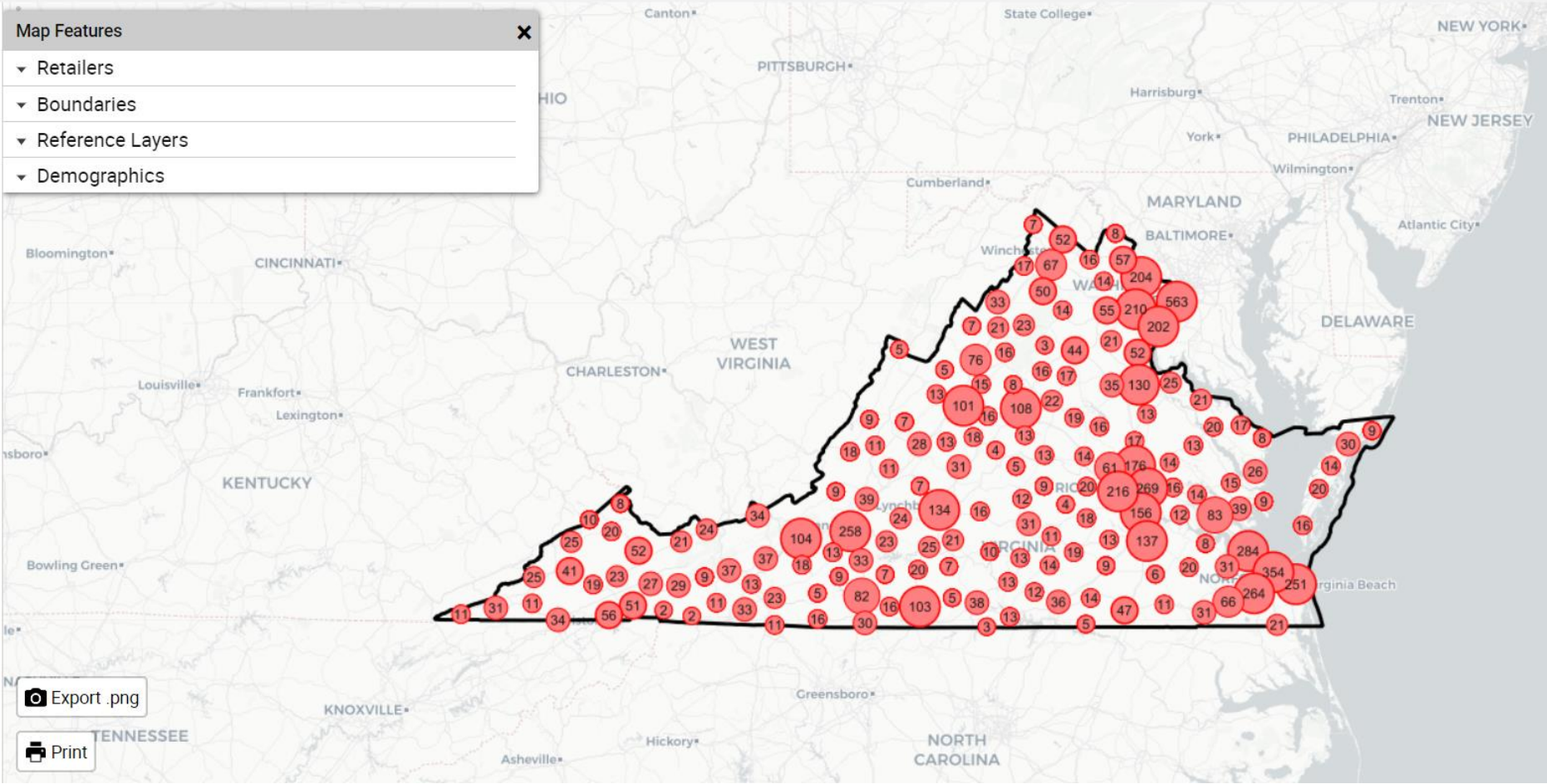
STORIES ▾

USERS

colleen.hu

Map Features ✕

- ▾ Retailers
- ▾ Boundaries
- ▾ Reference Layers
- ▾ Demographics



Export .png

Print

Store Assessments

Internal: For Virginia POST users only

VIRGINIA Custom Store Assessment Form (adapted from STARS)



YOUR NAME _____

STORE NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE _____

ZIP _____

DATE _____

TIME _____

SURVEY

Q1. Can you visit the store? [survey_why]

- Yes [Continue]
- No, store does not exist or is permanently closed [Skip to Q24a]
- No, store closed at time of visit [Continue with Q2-Q7, then skip to Q24a]
- No, temporary/short-term or seasonal closure [Continue with Q2-Q7, then skip to Q24a]
- No, under 18 not allowed [Continue with Q2-Q7, then skip to Q24a]
- No, members only [Continue with Q2-Q7, then skip to Q24a]
- No, unsafe [Skip to Q24a]
- No, other reason not listed [Continue with Q2-Q7, then skip to Q24a]

RETAILER CHARACTERISTICS

Q2. Are you using a GPS ENABLED device? [gps_enabled]

- (true) Yes [Continue]
- (false) No [Skip to Q3]

Merchant Education

THE SALE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS, NICOTINE VAPOR PRODUCTS OR ALTERNATIVE NICOTINE PRODUCTS

TO ANY PERSON UNDER 21 YEARS OF AGE

IS PROHIBITED BY LAW.

COUNTER ACT

Help protect Virginia's next generation of youth from a lifetime of addiction by not buying tobacco for a youth.

MERCHANT PLEDGE FORM **COUNTER ACT**

As a merchant and concerned community member, I am dedicated to protecting our children's health. I understand that in joining the COUNTER ACT campaign, I must be committed to reducing the amount of tobacco advertising in my store, and be in full compliance with all federal, state, and local laws pertaining to tobacco sales to minors. Therefore, I agree to implement the following policies in my store:

- Check I.D. of anyone purchasing tobacco who appears to be under 27 years old.
- Eliminate all tobacco self-service displays (including chew tobacco, cigars, and vapor products).
- Remove tobacco advertising from places below three feet.
- Remove tobacco advertising close to candy displays.
- Remove tobacco advertising from counter tops and the surrounding areas.
- Post an official COUNTER ACT sticker at each cash register stating that the sale of tobacco to minors is illegal, as required by law.
- Reduce overall tobacco advertising in my store by _____ number of advertisements.
- Thoroughly train my employees to ask customers for I.D. and regularly remind them to do so.
- Thoroughly train my employees to detect fake I.D.s and give them regular updates to changes to government issued I.D.s.
- Other: _____

I understand that upon signing the pledge, I may receive recognition in local newspapers and other local media, as well as from other community organizations, businesses and individuals.

Owner/Manager Name _____	Store Name _____
Signature _____	Date _____

Counter Tools Resources

- Counter Tools POST
 - www.va.countertools.org
- Counter Tools Mapper
 - <https://mapping.countertools.org/virginia/>
- Elizabeth Gerndt, Project Manager
 - elizabeth@countertools.org
- Counter Tools Help Desk
 - help@countertools.org
- Counter Tools Dropbox
 - <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/xf6kmieyx29e0dg/AABgTR4d9pcBwcYerfkPzF9ka?dl=0>

Contact Information

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