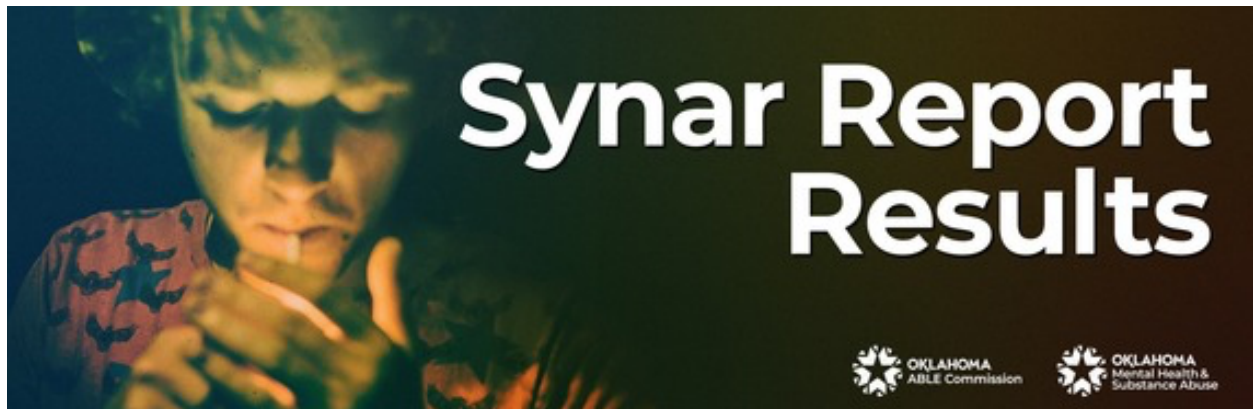




OKLAHOMA
Mental Health &
Substance Abuse

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sustained Progress in Preventing Underage Tobacco Sales: Oklahoma Synar Report



Oklahoma City, OK – November 01, 2024 – Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS) collaborated with the Alcoholic Beverage Law Enforcement (ABLE) Commission to complete the Annual Synar Report. This report is required by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for states to review their progress in enforcing laws that limit access to tobacco use among the youth and young adults. Continued progress has been made over the last two years, with many businesses in Oklahoma now refusing to sell tobacco to individuals under 21. This year's statewide compliance rate reached 86.2%, with urban counties like Tulsa County showing further improvement with a 96.3% compliance rate. However, regular tobacco compliance checks remain necessary statewide, especially in rural areas where sales to minors continue to occur at higher rates.

"All Oklahomans deserve a future free from the harms of tobacco, especially our youth," said Allie Friesen, Commissioner of the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. "We are encouraged by the progress shown in this year's Synar Report, with compliance rates improving across the state. These results reflect the commitment of our community partners, retailers, and enforcement agencies to protect young people's health and well-being. However, there is still work to be done, particularly in rural areas, to ensure all of Oklahoma's youth are protected from tobacco-related harms."

In July 1992, Congress enacted the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration Reorganization Act (PL 102-321), which includes an amendment (section 1926) aimed at decreasing youth access to tobacco. This amendment, named for its sponsor, Congressman Mike Synar of Oklahoma, requires states to enact and enforce laws prohibiting the sale or distribution of tobacco products to individuals under the age of 18. In 2019, the minimum age for tobacco sales was raised from 18 to 21 at the federal level, with Oklahoma following suit in 2020 to require individuals be 21 years of age to purchase tobacco.

States are required to have a compliance rate of at least 80 percent (or a non-compliance rate of no more than 20 percent) regarding the sale of tobacco products to minors and must demonstrate compliance to receive their full Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant (SABG) award. These results are a testament to the collaborative efforts of government agencies, retailers, and communities in upholding the law and protecting our youth.

“ABLE’s mission is to protect the health and safety of all Oklahoma citizens - especially children,” said ABLE Director Brandon Clabes. “Oklahoma businesses are doing a good job of refusing to sell to underage buyers, but we can always do better. We are proud to partner with ODMHSAS to help educate the public on the dangers of nicotine and improve the health of our young people.” If you should have questions regarding the Annual Synar Report, please contact Lauren Kidwell at Synar@odmhsas.org.

For More Information: Visit <https://oklahoma.gov/odmhsas> or contact the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline, 1-800-QUIT NOW (784-8669)

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