



Contact: Tom Briant, Executive Director
info@natocentral.org; 1-866-869-8888

Tobacco Retailers Score High “A” During FDA Compliance Checks

Minneapolis, MN (Nov. 10, 2011) – More than 96% of tobacco retailers inspected by federal contractors in 38 states and the District of Columbia were found to be in compliance with new tobacco regulations designed to prevent the sale of tobacco products to minors, according to a report issued by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) today.

As of today, FDA-commissioned state officials have conducted more than 27,500 compliance checks at retail stores that sell tobacco products and found that the vast majority of stores were in compliance with federal laws regarding the sale and distribution of tobacco products to adults.

“Tobacco retailers scored a high “A” in the first year of inspections in the states that have FDA inspection programs,” said Tom Briant, Executive Director of the National Association of Tobacco Outlets (NATO). “We are extremely pleased and will continue to do our part to help educate the few who are out of compliance. Our goal is to prevent sales of tobacco to under-age youth.”

He said that the industry’s effort would be greatly enhanced if the FDA would use part of the \$24 million budget allocated for compliance programs to issue letters of compliance to the tobacco retailers that pass compliance inspections.

“It would be a very significant, positive reinforcement tool for store management and store employees. Such letters would encourage retail managers and employees to maintain that high standard of managing and restricting tobacco sales only to those of legal age,” he said.

Currently tobacco retailers have to check the FDA website on a regular basis to determine if their store or stores were inspected and to learn the outcome of the inspection.

“A letter of the type we recommend would be a source of pride and would reinforce to employees that they must continue to work hard and do their part to help keep tobacco out of the hands of minors,” he said.

For more information about NATO, click on www.natocentral.org or call Tom Briant at 1-866-869-8888.

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