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MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local tobacco retailer checks expand to include e-cigarettes

Local tobacco retailer checks that make sure stores don't sell tobacco products to minors are expanding to include e-cigarettes. The change is being made through the statewide Wisconsin Wins program to address e-cigarettes' rising popularity with teens. The 2014 Wisconsin Youth Tobacco Survey shows 7.9% of our state's high school students currently use e-cigarettes, compared to 4.5% of high school students nationally in 2013.

Last year, 29.4% of Pierce County retailers sold tobacco products to minors. To decrease that number, participating youth perform regular checks through Wisconsin Wins to make sure tobacco retailers aren't selling tobacco products to minors. Retailers that pass their checks are thanked by Wisconsin Wins representatives and participating youth, while retailers that sell to youth are provided with resources to help them avoid future illegal sales and potential fines. Regular compliance checks are important to make sure that our youth are not easily accessing a product that can addict them and cause negative health effects.

Desiray Matthews, senior at Ellsworth High School, has been one of the minors working with the Wisconsin Wins program to carry out retailer compliance checks. Desiray has commented on the numerous, outrageous flavors of e-cigarettes including coffee, bubble gum, and fruity flavors such as orange and cherry. She noted that an area of concern is that e-cigarettes are especially appealing to young people, as research has shown.

Tobacco retailers in Pierce County can receive free training to avoid underage tobacco and nicotine product sales at www.smokecheck.org. For more on local tobacco prevention and control efforts, contact Sara Simonson, Public Health Nurse at 715-273-6755.

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