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**Survey Shows Continued Compliance Prohibiting Sale of Tobacco to Minors**

**CHARLESTON, W.Va.** – Results from the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities (BBHBF) annual statewide survey indicate that 87.8 percent of retailers inspected did not sell tobacco products to youth under the age of 18 during 2014. This is the 15<sup>th</sup> consecutive year in which West Virginia has been in compliance with federal requirements that limit retail sales of tobacco to minor youth.

“The Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities continues to reduce the availability of tobacco products to youth by partnering with the West Virginia State Police and BBHBF grantees to conduct random and unannounced inspections of tobacco sales outlets accessible to minors,” said Vickie Jones, Commissioner of BBHBF. “On behalf of the Bureau, I applaud those retailers and employees who contribute to the State’s tobacco prevention efforts by not selling tobacco products to youth under the age of 18.”

The Synar Survey, named for its sponsor, Congressman Mike Synar of Oklahoma, was enacted as part of the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration Reorganization Act. The results are based on annual inspection results.

Federal law authorizes the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant and requires states to enact and enforce laws prohibiting sales of tobacco products to minors. The state must demonstrate that its non-compliance rate does not exceed the target of 20% for illegal tobacco sales to minor youth in order to maintain \$3.5M in prevention and treatment funds. SAPT, the largest funding stream in West Virginia supporting substance abuse prevention and treatment, is administered by the Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities.

West Virginia’s 2015 Synar report is available for public comment at <http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/bhbf/resources/Pages/default.aspx>.

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