

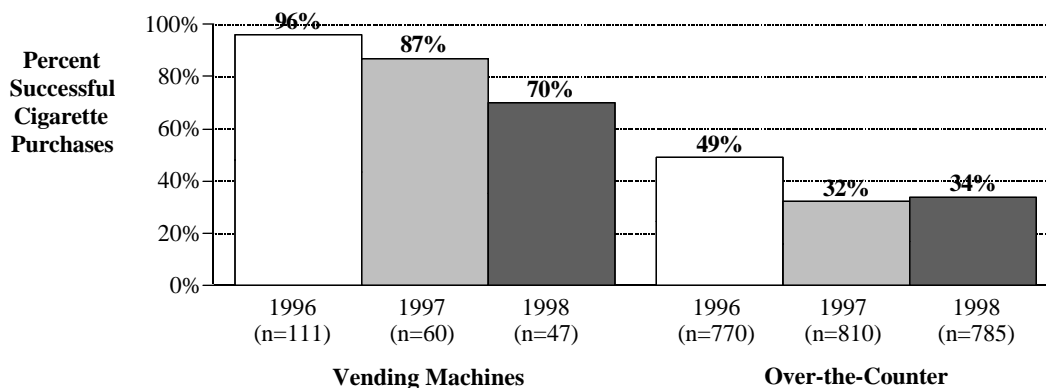
## A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

### *Maryland Study Finds Progress in Curbing Vending Machine Cigarette Sales to Minors; Less Success with Over-the-Counter Sales*

In compliance with the Synar Amendment (see box below), the Maryland Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration and the Office of the Comptroller of the Treasury annually conduct random unannounced inspections of tobacco outlets to ensure that Maryland's law prohibiting the sale of tobacco to youth under age 18 is being enforced. In 1998, underage youth (aged 15 to 17) working for the State were able to purchase cigarettes from 70% of vending machines sampled and from 34% of outlets selling tobacco over-the-counter. While the 70% purchase rate for vending machines is high, it represents a continued improvement over past years. Over-the-counter sales to minors, however, remained stable from 1997 to 1998. Continued efforts should be made to ensure that over-the-counter cigarette sales to minors decrease, such as "providing assistance in quick and easy methods of calculating ages from birth dates and current dates" and "training younger clerks in the requirements of the law" (p. 5).

**Percentage of Successful Underage Cigarette Purchases in Maryland,  
by Type of Tobacco Outlet, 1996-1998**



\*Inspections were conducted between July 19 and August 19, 1998. Youth did not at any time touch or make an actual purchase of tobacco products. The transactions were terminated at the point at which compliance could be determined. The youth were honest when questioned about their ages and they presented actual ID's when they were requested.

SOURCE: Thomas Davis, Maryland Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration, "Maryland 1998 Synar Report."

#### **What is the Synar Amendment?**

The Synar Amendment (42, U.S.C. 300x-26), part of the Public Health Service Act, requires states to have and enforce laws that prohibit the sale of tobacco to anyone under the age of 18. States are also required to conduct annual, random, and unannounced inspections of both stores and vending machines to ensure that the law is being enforced. More information about the Synar Amendment is available on the CESAR BOARD at [www.cesar.umd.edu](http://www.cesar.umd.edu).

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