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## **CVS Drugstores Under Fire from Community Leaders for Selling Expired Products, Failure to Provide Equal Access**

Houston, TX. – Results of a new survey released today reveal that 85 percent of CVS stores surveyed in Greater Houston are still selling expired products, according to Change to Win. News comes just weeks after another survey found expired products for sale at more than 90 percent of CVS stores visited in Greater Houston. These expired goods included over-the-counter medicines, infant formula, and milk products.

Local community and faith leaders held a demonstration outside a local CVS pharmacy on Thursday, May 21 to challenge CVS to stop selling expired products, provide equal access and other issues. Demonstrations took place today outside CVS stores in nine states, including Texas. Surveyors recently visited 310 CVS stores in 9 states and found expired products for sale at 180 CVS stores, more than 58 percent.

On March 25, the Houston community publically demanded that CVS rid its store shelves of expired products after an investigation revealed that 91% of stores surveyed had expired goods on their shelves. CVS failed to heed the community's call. "We are here now a month later waiting for CVS to keep its word and clean up. Our community can no longer stand for this," said Cesar Espinoza, Executive Director of America Para Todos.

A survey of 27 more stores in Greater Houston conducted three weeks later revealed that CVS is not taking the public health of the community seriously by removing expired products from store shelves. In the second round, surveyors found:

- 85% of CVS stores visited had expired dairy, infant formula or medications for sale.
- 41% of CVS stores surveyed had expired infant formula on store shelves.
- 85% of CVS stores surveyed had expired medications, including 30% with expired children's medicine.

### **CVS's Failure to Provide Equal Access**

A study found that CVS stores surveyed in Greater Houston reflect a national pattern of CVS failing to provide equal access to all communities. CVS operates

fewer stores per person in communities of color and lower-income communities. CVS is far more likely to allocate services—like in-store medical clinics—to affluent and majority-white areas than to communities of color and lower income areas.

“People of color and Latinos suffer disproportionately from illnesses like heart disease and diabetes. We tend to use more prescription medications. There is a need for pharmacies in these communities, and certainly plenty of opportunity for companies like CVS. In neighborhoods that struggle to deal with providing a stable home, rising costs and unemployment there are fewer stores and services available. Even the quality and safety of products in these stores is questionable. We find CVS is selling expired products and marketing a false promise of integrity,” said Student and Community activist Sandy Christian Reyes.

Less than half of Greater Houston’s population lives in the whitest zip codes--where fewer than 30% of the population are people of color--yet 8 of the 10 in-store medical MinuteClinics in Greater Houston are located in these areas.

“When communities are ‘redlined’ it’s more than just a lack of trust and respect. CVS is showing disdain for people below a certain income level,” said Ester King, a founding member of Houston’s National Black United Front chapter. “CVS’s practices put our communities at grave risk.”

### **Locked Condoms Found in CVS Stores Operating in Communities of Color**

CVS keeps condoms under lock and key in at one-fifth of the Greater Houston CVS stores visited. In each of these stores, all the condoms are inaccessible without staff assistance, despite CVS’s claim that all stores have some unlocked packages available. This requires customers to ask for staff assistance to buy condoms, which creates a barrier and stigmatization of condoms and condom users, according to public health advocates.

The survey suggests that Greater Houston stores with condom lockup are also more likely located in areas with the greatest concentration of people of color, according to U.S. census bureau data.

### **“CVS Goods Gone Bad”**

The website [www.CureCVSNow.org](http://www.CureCVSNow.org) asks customers who observe expired products for sale in CVS stores to upload a photo and submit their story to the online gallery of “CVS Goods Gone Bad” where they can also sign a petition urging CVS to clean up its act.

For more information visit [www.CureCVSNow.org](http://www.CureCVSNow.org)

**Cure CVS** is an initiative by Change to Win and partner organizations to reform the drugstore industry, starting with CVS, the country's leading provider of prescription drugs and largest drugstore chain. By joining concerned citizen groups with the six million members of Change to Win unions, Cure CVS aims to ensure that CVS provides equal access across all communities and income levels to its stores and services, offers fair and accurate prices, provides quality products and services, protects customers' privacy and puts quality pharmacy care first.

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