



February 2026



Heartfelt Greetings Rural Partners,

With reporting complete, we can all pivot back to the work we all love and the vision we hold together—helping our rural communities step more fully into health and well being.

RISE is here if you want to take a look at your work plan and next reporting period's activities to take stock, brainstorm, pivot if needed, and set a clear direction. [Reach out](#) to set up a 1-on-1 with Shelly and JoAnn or suggest a topic for exploration for the Rural Initiatives Workgroup (RIW).

As always, we encourage you to be sure to include yourself in your circle of care and concern as you work to make your community a better place.



Upcoming Events



!! New name!!

Rural Tobacco & Nicotine Treatment Cessation Discussion Group (Bimonthly)

First Monday of every other month

April 6, 2026

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

[Zoom Link](#)

Meeting ID: 854 6565 2523

Passcode: 265859

Phone in: 669-444-9171

Informal discussion group hosted by RISE for all things cessation in our rural communities. Contact [JoAnn Saccato](#) for more information and with your topic ideas.



Rural Initiatives Workgroup (RIW)

Third Tuesday of the month

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

3:00 - 4:30 PM

Your celebrations, concerns, and questions

Topic or guest ideas? Contact jsaccato@healthcollaborative.org

The Rural Initiatives Workgroup (RIW) is a monthly workgroup hosted by RISE for rural projects to learn, share information, network, celebrate wins, and brainstorm challenges. Invitation only. Contact [Shelly Brantley](#).



RISE Office Hours: Urban and Suburban Projects

Third Thursday of the month

Thursday, February 19, 2026

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

[Zoom Link](#)

Meeting ID: 8763130 5788

Passcode: 374332

Phone in: 669-444-9171

Drop in office hours for urban and suburban projects working in rural jurisdictions.

Contact [JoAnn Saccato](#) to receive an Outlook calendar invite.



RACING FORWARD, SWINGING BIG:
UNITED FOR PUBLIC
HEALTH'S FUTURE
Louisville, KY | Online | July 14-17, 2026



2026 NACCHO360 Student Poster Competition
Deadline: February 28, 2026

is offering you a chance to present your work at their 2026 national public health conference, ***Racing Forward, Swinging Big: United for Public Health's Future***, in Louisville, KY and virtually. This is a unique opportunity to share your work and connect with public health professionals from across the country.

[Learn More About the Poster Competition](#)

[Learn More About the Conference](#)



California State Rural Health Association (CSRHA) Annual Conference comes to Folsom, March 26, 2026

Funding Fades, Innovation Rises: The Future of Rural Health is this year's theme for the 2026 CSRHA Annual Conference. The conference is for healthcare leaders from rural clinics, hospitals, and other rural health partners and this year will focus on "a candid discussion about what rural health communities are doing to remain resilient and thrive in this challenging environment."

[Learn More and Register](#)

!SAVE THE DATE!

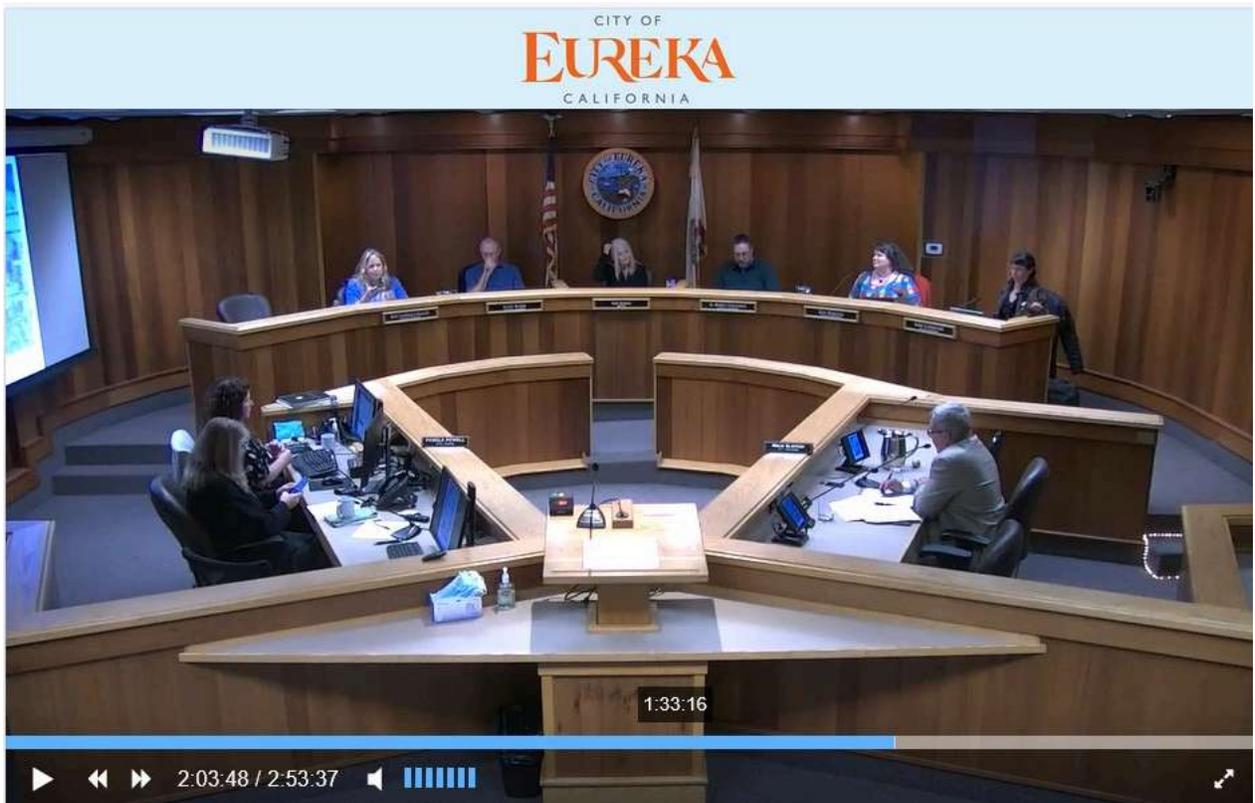


2026 I&E Days

May 11-12, 2026
Sacramento, CA

[I&E Days Website](#)

Rural News & Successes



Eureka Passes Tobacco Retail License Ordinance

With protections including a ban on flavors, no sales by pharmacies, and proximity limits of 600 feet to any school or community center and one-quarter mile to any existing tobacco retailer, Eureka City Council **unanimously** adopted a tobacco retail license ordinance on November 4, 2025. The inclusion of an extensive definition of a “community center” means the the ordinance covers many public spaces.

[Read the Ordinance](#)

[Watch the 2nd Read](#)



Over 100 professionals, parents, students and community members attended Air Out the Truth Community Tobacco Forum, November, 2025. (Photo courtesy of Yuba County Health and Human Services)

Air Out the Truth Community Tobacco Forum

(Submitted by Chaya Galicia, Program Manager, Yuba County Health and Human Services.)

hosted the Air Out The Truth Community Tobacco Forum. Over 100 professionals, parents, students, and community members filed in to get out of the rain and into a transformational atmosphere where dynamic speakers and visuals “aired out the truth” on the dangers and realities of commercial tobacco use.

Highlights of the event included a poster showcase that spotlighted the work of local agencies working on this issue, including statistics and research on vaping, and the impact that quitting has on a young person’s mood and energy levels; a panel discussion titled “From Toxicology to Policy” describing recent U.C. Davis research on the toxicity of vapes and what steps local communities can take to protect their residents from these harms; and incredible personal stories from middle and high school students who have used tobacco and/or chosen to remain tobacco-free due to a family history of illness and death.



High school students receive certificates for participation in the Wellness Wins competition at the 2025 Air Out the Truth Community Tobacco Forum. (Photo courtesy of Yuba County Health and Human Services.)

One of the most impressionable pieces of the forum was viewing the wellness wins competition entries. Yuba County high school clubs were invited to participate in the competition with a theme aimed to portray nicotine versus well-being, and four clubs submitted outstanding video entries for judging. ([Watch videos HERE](#)). Judges for the competition included a member from the Marysville City Council, the Yuba County Board of Supervisors, and a Yuba County Superior Court judge.



Attendees at the Air Out the Truth Community Tobacco Forum look for tobacco and other “risky behavior” products in this mock studio apartment. (Photo courtesy of Yuba County Department of Health and Human Services.)

Another impactful experience attendees participated in was the “In Plain Sight” activity, where they were invited to walk through a young person’s studio apartment to locate all of the tobacco products and other risky behavior items. With a total of 23 products hidden “In Plain Sight” in the room, only 2 attendees found them all! This was eye-opening for all in attendance and really shows the importance of being diligent in having often difficult conversations with youth about their health and well being.

We are so proud of the work that went into making this event so successful, and plan to continue the momentum as we strive for local policy change. We’ve heard the message for years that commercial tobacco use is unhealthy and takes lives, but without policy change at a local level, we aren’t able to protect our young people and future generations from these dangers. We’re finally at a place to create a lasting change in our community, and we’re excited to see what’s next.

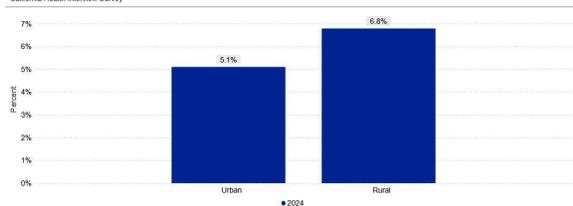
Contact Chaya Galicia to Learn More

Want your project or community's work featured in a future issue of RISE News?

Contact [JoAnn](#).

Rural Resources

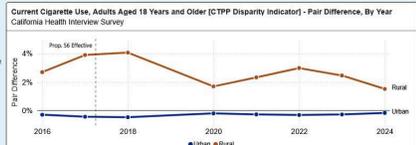
Current Cigarette Use, Adults Aged 18 Years and Older [CTPP Disparity Indicator] - Point Estimate, Most Recent Data
California Health Interview Survey



DISPARITY MEASURES

Pair Difference

The pair difference disparity measure is the difference between a specific group's rate and the overall state rate. This helps us see how different each group is from the state average. A value of 0 percent means no difference, while values further from 0 percent indicate greater difference.



Access the Dashboard

CTPP's New Data Dashboard is Live!

A variety of state- and county-level data points from a multitude of sources is now available in one convenient dashboard thanks to CTPP's new Data Dashboard. From tobacco use, cessation, secondhand smoke to retail environment and policy coverage, the data can be seen in multiple formats including raw, graphical representation, and trends. As well, graphic representation of disparity differences and differences from the mean options are available.



New Resource! The Truth About Chew

TECC’s new fact card, The Truth About Chew, is a quick way to share information about this dangerous product and includes access to Kick It California.

[Access Fact Card](#)

Great Resource for Engaging Non-Traditional Partners

The California Tobacco Endgame Center for Organizing and Engagement released this four page guide in 2022, but the information and importance of engaging with non-traditional partners for our work is ever more important. From who to engage to how to engage them, this quick guide will increase your knowledge and confidence to grow your collaboration and coalition.

[Access the Guide](#)

REACHING THE TOBACCO ENDGAME
TIPS FOR ENGAGING NON-TRADITIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

What Is A “Non-Traditional” Organization?

When we use the term “non-traditional” organization in California’s tobacco-free movement, we are typically referring to any entity that does not receive funding from Proposition 99 and 56 tobacco taxes through the California Tobacco Control Program (CTCP). Examples of these “non-traditional” organizations are shown alongside those that could be characterized as “traditional.”

TRADITIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	NON-TRADITIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
LLA/Health Departments	Art, Music, Culture
CTCP Grantees	Government
Alcohol and Drug Programs	Community Planning, Safety, and Service
Education (Including Tobacco Use Prevention Education (TUPE) Programs)	Early Childhood Development
Hospitals, Clinics, and Health Care Providers	Environmental
Social Service Organizations	Economic Development
Voluntary Health or Tobacco Control Organizations	Faith Based
Other Tobacco Control Funded Agencies	Health and Healthcare
	Housing
	Labor Unions
	Nutrition/Food
	Schools
	Social Justice/Human Rights
	Youth Development/Leadership Member Recruitment

TIPS FOR ENGAGING NON-TRADITIONAL ORGANIZATIONS 1 OF 4

Broken Promises to Our Children

A State-by-State
Look at the
1998 Tobacco
Settlement
27 Years Later



Read the Report

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids Releases Annual Report

“Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable disease and death in the U.S., killing nearly 500,000 Americans every year and costing over \$241 billion in annual health care expenses, more than 60% of which is paid by taxpayers through government programs like Medicare and Medicaid. Cigarette smoking is also a major risk factor for many chronic diseases, including cancer, heart disease, stroke, COPD and diabetes. While smoking rates have been greatly reduced, nearly 10% of U.S. adults – more than 26 million people – currently smoke, and more than 16 million Americans live with a disease caused by smoking. In addition, an estimated 2.25 million U.S. youth currently use a tobacco product, including over 1.6 million who use e-cigarettes.”

The annual report, [Broken Promises to Our Children: A State-by-State Look at the 1998 Tobacco Settlement 27 Years Later](#) is available on the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids' website.

Rural Health Transformation Program Awards

The Rural Health Transformation (RHT) Program is a \$50 billion federal initiative designed to stabilize rural health systems, expand access to care, modernize infrastructure, and ensure long-term sustainability. This report summarizes each state's planned RHT initiatives. California's \$233,639,308 award will be administered by the California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) | California State Office of Rural Health.

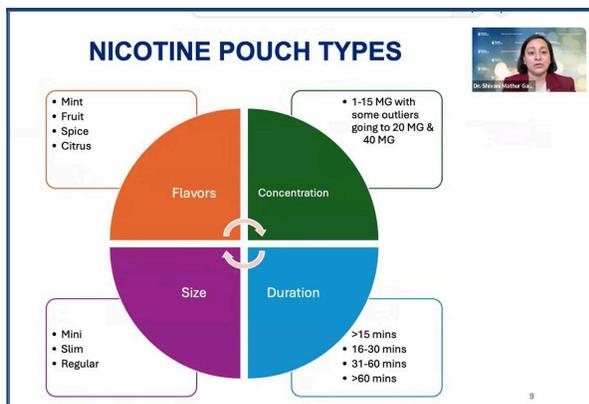
and the award

Rural Health Transformation Program Awards

State-by-State Summary of Year 1



Read the Report



Watch Webinar

The Pouch Problem: Protecting Kids from a New Nicotine Trend

From [Parents Against Vaping E-Cigarettes](#) comes a webinar with Dr. Shivani Gaiha (Harvard Medical School, Boston Children's Hospital) and Dr. Bonnie Halpern-Felsher (Professor, Stanford University, Stanford Reach Lab) with information and strategies to protect youth from this new nicotine trend.



CDPH reminds the public to **avoid** Kratom and 7-OH products

CDPH Warns Retailers and Public About the Dangers of Kratom-derived Products and 7-OH

With a reminder that these products have not been tested for safety, efficacy, or consistency and are not FDA approved, the California Department of Public Health recently issued a warning to retailers and consumers that these products are not only proving to be unsafe, they are illegal to sell for consumption in California.

[Learn More From CDPH Press Release](#)

Trending Tidbits

Mexico Passes Nationwide Vape Ban

Beginning January 17, 2026, it is illegal to produce, distribute, market, or sell vapes and electronic cigarettes in Mexico. Penalties include up to eight years in jail and fines of up to



exceeds USD \$12,500).

While personal possession and consumption remains legal (as long as there is no commercial intent), those disembarking from passenger cruise ships with vapes may be considered “importing their personal devices” and may be subject to the new law.

Mexico now joins [46 other countries with a ban on the sale and distribution of e-cigarettes](#) (eight in Latin America). It also banned smoking in most public spaces about two decades ago.

NO

- Production
- Marketing
- Distribution
- Sales

[Learn more](#)



Reminder: RISE is Here to Help!

Need help building your work plan? Reporting? Learning how to engage with community? RISE is here to help with these topics and more. Email [JoAnn](#) or [Shelly](#) for technical assistance or submit a request using the link below.

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