



March 2025

Greetings Rural Partners!

We hope you're feeling the awakening energy of early spring both personally and in your projects. We have lots of exciting happenings emerging including our RISE Up Leadership Academy, our newly released guide to making verbal public comments for general plans, and a new drop-in office hour opportunity for urban and suburban projects working in rural jurisdictions. Read all about it below.

Here's to a fantastic March for us all!

Shelly, JoAnn, Sue, & Hayley



Upcoming Events



RISE Up Leadership Academy

Empowering change in rural communities

Topics Include

- Identifying leadership strengths
- The case for rural social norm change
- Rural tobacco marketing
- Successful rural policy strategies
- Capstone project preparing you for a successful presentation to local elected officials

Who is Eligible

2 years or less as Local Lead Agency or Competitive Grantee staff serving a rural community



Limited Space Available



[REGISTER HERE](#)

Date/Time/Place

Virtual via Zoom
Thursdays, April 3, 10, 17, & 24, 2025
9:00 - 10:30 AM

Registration Deadline

March 15, 2025

Questions?

sbrantley@healthcollaborative.org
530.345.2483 x 216

!Registration Open!

**Thursdays
April 3, 10, 17, 24, 2025
9:00 - 10:30 AM
Via Zoom**

A great opportunity for those new to rural tobacco (2 years or less). Learn about the uniqueness of tobacco prevention in rural communities, creative and successful community strategies, and self-empowerment as a community leader in tobacco prevention. The Academy will culminate with an exciting capstone project that will prepare you for greater success in your work!

Register

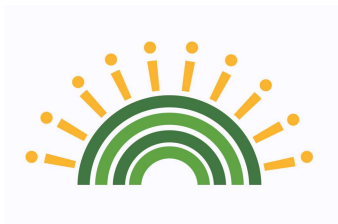


Rural Tobacco Cessation Discussion Group (Bimonthly)

**April 7, 2025
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM**

[Zoom Link](#)

Meeting ID: 854 6565 2523
Passcode: 265859
Phone in: 669-444-9171



Rural Initiatives Workgroup (RIW)

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

3:00 - 4:30 PM

Topics / Guests

Communities of Excellence Survey Release

Stacy Kruse, Chief

CTPP Community Engagement and Local Programs Unit

Searching for Buried Treasure about Members Using 3 New Tools

Robin Kipke, MS, Senior Evaluation Associate

Tobacco Control Evaluation Center

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](#).



!!NEW!!

RISE Office Hours: Urban and Suburban Projects

Third Thursday of the month beginning...

March 20, 2025

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

[Zoom Link](#)

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.



[Learn More & Register](#)

Information & Education Days (I&E Days!)

This annual event organized by the American Heart Association's Tobacco Endgame Center for Organizing and Engagement is designed to educate the California Legislature about the impact tobacco has on our communities, and the local efforts being carried out to address them.

(Picture at left: Participants in the 2024 Rural Caucus meeting.)

Train the Trainer TTS Training this Spring

This tuition-free opportunity to learn how to train Tobacco Treatment Specialists expands cessation opportunities in your community.

**DEADLINE for applications: March 14,
2025, 5:00 PM**

For more information on program content and eligibility, please contact Caroline Cranos at caroline.cranos@umassmed.edu or Karen Costas at karen.costas1@umassmed.edu.



UMass Chan
MEDICAL SCHOOL

Interested in becoming an Accredited Tobacco Treatment Specialist (TTS) Trainer for Your Organization and Partners?
Attend the Train the Trainer in Tobacco Treatment (T4) Program

Training Dates: April 16 and 17, 2025
April 16th: 8:30 am- 4:30 pm
April 17th: 8:30 am- 11:30 am

Location: Mission Bay Conference Center
1675 Owens St., San Francisco, CA 94158
Conference Room 4

[Learn More & Apply](#)

IMPLEMENTATION WITH INTENTION

Practical Tools for Building Resilient Communities

THURS | MAR 27 | PDT 12-1PM

aces aware
SCREEN. TREAT. HEAL.



Implementation with Intention Training to Offer Community Strategies for Cessation

When adjusted for covariates, a [study](#) indicates rural residency is associated with a 1.29 times increased odds of exposure to 4 or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) compared to suburban residency. [Studies](#) link ACEs to an increased risk of tobacco use and the more ACE's someone experiences, the higher their risk of tobacco use.

An upcoming session in the "Implementation with Intention" series will focus on how community-based organizations can employ evidence-informed stress-mitigation strategies to help clients heal from toxic stress.

Panelists will share real-world examples of how to adapt the strategies to your community's unique cultural and social contexts, overcome implementation challenges, and build capacity for sustainable use. [Dr. Alicia Carranza](#), Health Educator, Tobacco Use Prevention Program, Orange County Health Care Agency, will focus on incorporating these strategies in tobacco cessation and control.

[Learn More & Register](#)



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

Contact [JoAnn](#).

RISE Advisory Committee

RISE is proud to have committed representation from each of our California rural area regions through our Advisory Committee. Committee members are tasked with meeting monthly to provide the RISE team with feedback on educational material development, outreach strategies, policy goals, and more. We acknowledge and appreciate the dedication and expertise each committee member brings to our RISE efforts!



Crystal Yang, MPH
Program Coordinator

Tobacco Use Prevention Program, Del Norte County Public Health

Crystal Yang, MPH, is RISE’s newest Advisory Committee member, joining because she knows tobacco prevention is always evolving and wants to learn and grow in her role with the Del Norte Tobacco Use Prevention Program. She is excited about her opportunity to exchange ideas with other advocates that can help strengthen her efforts in supporting rural communities tackling tobacco-related health disparities.

With a Master of Public Health in Community Health Education from CSU Northridge, Crystal has worked in tobacco prevention for over four years focusing on policy advocacy, community outreach, and education.

Crystal is passionate about reducing health disparities and creating meaningful, community-driven initiatives that make wellness accessible to all. “Public health is about more than just policies and programs—it’s about people, their stories, and empowering communities to take charge of their health.”

“Tobacco prevention can feel overwhelming at first, and there will be moments when challenges feel discouraging. But don’t give up. The work you do matters, even if change takes time.”

Born and raised in Fresno, Crystal was surprised to find herself in a small coastal community. But after moving there, she quickly became aware of the unique challenges rural communities face—higher tobacco use rates, limited health resources, and fewer supportive services. Seeing challenges firsthand motivated her to take on her role. “I wanted to make a tangible difference in my community by promoting healthy behaviors and addressing health disparities that disproportionately impact rural areas like Del Norte County.”

One of the most impactful things Crystal has learned is that in a small community, one-size-fits-all messaging doesn't work. “Messages need to be tailored in a way that truly resonate with the audience—whether that means using personal stories, culturally relevant materials, or trusted community voices,” she reflected.

For those just coming into tobacco prevention work, Crystal encourages patience. “Tobacco prevention can feel overwhelming at first, and there will be moments when challenges feel discouraging,” she noted. “But don't give up. The work you do matters, even if change takes time. You'll know you're in the right place when you find yourself deeply invested in the impact you're making.”

Crystal recognizes that advocating for policy change is challenging and doesn't always go as planned. “We pursued a Tobacco Retail License (TRL) ordinance for Del Norte County/Crescent City twice before it was finally adopted,” she acknowledged. “Even our youth coalition's efforts were initially rejected. It was a frustrating process, but it reinforced the importance of persistence and community engagement.”

Crystal has two doodles, Maple and Token, who she spends time with adventuring, playing and cuddling. Her most recent passion is gardening, where she finds a lot of peace and accomplishment. “Watching a seedling grow into a vegetable or fruit I can use in a meal is so rewarding!” She also likes to travel, meeting new people and learning from different cultures.

The RISE team looks forward to having Crystal on the Advisory Council! You can reach her at crystal.yang@co.del-norte.ca.us.

The success of RISE depends on guidance from rural health champions who understand the importance of reducing the presence of commercial tobacco in rural communities.

If you would like to get involved, consider becoming a member of our **Advisory Committee (AC)**.

AC members meet every other month (virtually or in-person) to provide feedback on:

- » Educational material development
- » Outreach strategies
- » Program evaluation
- » Policy goals
- » Website design and content
- » The Leadership Development Program

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Make a difference in your community!

- » Build connections with other rural health champions
- » Advocate on behalf of your community to help shape tobacco prevention efforts

CONTACT

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 ca-rise.org

 [RISE_California](https://www.instagram.com/RISE_California)

 [CA RISE](https://www.facebook.com/CA.RISE)

 [RISE_California](https://twitter.com/RISE_California)

Interested in becoming a member of our Advisory Committee? We are seeking representation from those who live/work in the Central Valley (Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, or Tulare counties) and Gold Country (Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Inyo, Mono, Nevada, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Sutter, or Tuolumne counties). Contact [Shelly Brantley](#) and check out our [recruitment card](#) and [orientation packet](#) for more information.

Rural Resources & Info

!!NEW!!

General Plan Verbal Public Comment Guide

RISE and the Sierra Club Tobacco Product Waste and Environmental Justice Project (with review by the Public Health Law Center) developed a verbal public comment guide to help projects and coalitions participate in their community's general plan process to address tobacco and nicotine prevention in these important visioning documents.

The guide includes a seven step process for creating the comments plus a 3-minute example addressing hazardous waste aspects of tobacco and nicotine products.

The guide is now available on the [RISE website](#).

GUIDE

Creating Verbal Public Comments for a General Plan/Element Update

Updates to a community's General Plan offer tobacco prevention coalitions an opportunity to contribute to the public discourse and visioning of their community's future. Ensuring health and tobacco-related issues are included at this stage can be key to future policy success. Below is a step-by-step guide and a 3-minute example to help you successfully create your project's verbal public comments.

- STEP 1** Introduce yourself and your project. Thank everyone for the opportunity to participate in this work, acknowledging the elected body (city council or board of supervisors) and other contributors, such as staff, planning commissioners, consultants, etc. (Mention all that apply.)
- STEP 2** Discuss how your project is relevant to General Plan (GP) work, incorporating select guiding principles and/or vision statements from your community's GP (e.g., healthy families, clean water, safe homes, etc.).
- STEP 3** Identify the Element(s) you'll discuss. Note what currently does or does not exist in the Element(s) and what is legally required.
- STEP 4** Provide a couple of relevant commercial tobacco/nicotine-related facts.
- STEP 5** Offer recommendations on how the Element(s) could address these issues.
- STEP 6** State how your project can offer help to the elected body, planning commission, staff, etc.
- STEP 7** Thank them again for this opportunity and note you have submitted or will follow up with a more detailed written statement.



RISE is a project of the California Health Collaborative.
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Access the Document

Revised CHIS Data Released

The UCLA Center for Health Policy Research released revised data today for the 2021, 2022, and 2023 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) to reflect updates made to certain affected variables to provide more accurate data results.

Access Updated Data Report



Center for Health Policy Research





CRST
CENTER for RAPID
SURVEILLANCE of
TOBACCO

Tobacco/Vape Product Image Library Open

The Center for Rapid Surveillance of Tobacco (CRST) has released an [Image Library](#) featuring images of confiscated tobacco products from the Youth Tobacco Monitoring Project. New images will be added quarterly, and you can filter them by state, product type, and year. If you are affiliated with a school and would like to submit photos, please email CRST_images@ints.rutgers.edu

Anyone wishing to use the Image Library for research purposes (presentations, publications, study stimuli) is asked to credit CRST.

[Access the Library](#)

Image Library

The Youth Tobacco Monitoring Project collects images of confiscated tobacco products and adds them to the library quarterly.



Trending Tidbits



Read on Info Hub...

Here's a question to ask as a way of striking up a conversation, gauging community readiness for endgame, and advancing social norm change.

“What do you think of a smoke-free {insert your jurisdiction name}?”



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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