Cottage Center for Population Health

Santa Barbara County PUBLIC Health DEPARTMENT

Health Indicator Profile:
Smoking (Cigarettes and Vaping)

Smoking tobacco is associated with numerous health problems and is the leading preventable cause of death in the United States. Smoking reduces overall health and contributes to increased risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and other diseases and conditions. Smoking also leads to increased absenteeism from work, health care utilization, and costs.[1]

Although smoking tobacco has decreased in recent years, there has been an increase in the use of e-cigarettes, also known as vaping. E-cigarettes can contain harmful substances, including nicotine, and have profound impacts on the health of adolescents and young adults, greatly increasing their likelihood to smoke cigarettes in adulthood.[2]

Findings from the 2022 Santa Barbara County CHNA

Measure for Cigarette Smokers

The prevalence of current cigarette smoking status is based on two questions: "Have you smoked at least 100 cigarettes in your entire life?" and "Do you now smoke cigarettes every day, some days, or not at all?" Only those who answered "Yes" to the first question are asked about current smoking status.

SMOKING QUESTION

Do you now smoke cigarettes every day, some days, or not at all?

[1] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). Smoking & tobacco use. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco
[2] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Quick Facts on the Risks of E-cigarettes for Kids, Teens, and Young Adults." Accessed 18 September 2020. https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/Quick-Facts-on-the-Risks-of-E-cigarettes-for-Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults.html

Table 1. Percentage of Current Adult Cigarette Smokers in Santa Barbara County

	2016 Santa Barbara CHNA[1]	2019 Santa Barbara CHNA[1]	2022 Santa Barbara CHNA	2021 California BRFSS	2030 Healthy People Target
	% (95% CI)	% (95% CI)	% (95% CI)	% (95% CI)	%
Overall	9.3 (7.4, 11.2)	11.5 (8.6, 14.4)	4.7 (2.5, 6.9)	8.8 (7.9, 9.7)^	6.1
Male	10.1 (7.8, 14.3)	15.4 (10.6, 20.3)	5.6 (2.1, 9.2)†	11.3 (9.9, 12.7)^	
Female	8.5 (6.0, 10.9)	7.4 (4.2, 10.7)	4.0 (1.3, 6.6)†	6.4 (5.3, 7.4)	
Hispanic	7.2 (4.3, 10.1)	6.8 (3.4, 10.3)	4.3 (0.2, 8.3)†	7.6 (6.3, 9.0)^	
Non-Hispanic White	10.7 (7.8, 13.6)	16.1 (11.3, 21.0)	3.2 (1.6, 4.8)^	10.0 (8.5,11.5)	
Other	8.6 (4.1, 13.1)	8.4 (0.0, 17.7)	9.8 (1.5, 18)†	8.7 (6.7, 10.7)^	
Age 18-44	8.8 (5.6, 12.0)	10.1 (5.7, 14.5)	3.7 (0.5, 6.9)†	8.1 (6.9, 9.4)^	
Age 45-64	12.9 (9.5, 16.2)	13.5 (8.4, 18.6)	5.2 (1.7, 8.7)†	10.8 (9.0, 12.6)^	
Age 65+	4.8 (2.3, 6.8)	12.3 (6.3, 18.3)	5.7 (0.9, 10.6)†	7.3 (5.4, 9.1)	
< High School	9.8 (4.5, 15.0)	13.2 (4.7, 21.8)	12.5 (0.8, 24.1)†	13.3 (10.6, 15.9)^	
High School Grad	11.9 (6.9, 17.0)	19.0 (10.6, 27.3)	5.4 (0, 11.6)†	11.9 (9.6, 14.2)^	
Some College	10.9 (7.4, 14.3)	13.8 (8.4, 19.1)	7.0 (2.5, 11.4)†	9.3 (7.5, 11.1)^	
College Grad	5.4 (2.9, 7.9)	3.5 (0.9, 6.1)	0.8 (0.2, 1.5)^†	3.9 (3.1, 4.7)^	
<$35,000	11.8 (8.3, 15.4)	18.5 (12.3, 24.6)	11.9 (4.1, 19.7)†	13.3 (11.4, 15.1)^	
$35,000-$74,999	9.2 (4.8, 13.7)	13.5 (6.3, 20.7)	3.7 (0.9, 6.5)†	9.8 (7.7, 12.0)^	
$75,000 or greater	6.9 (3.6, 10.2)	2.2 (0.4, 4.1)	2.3 (0.4, 4.3)^†	5.2 (4.0, 6.4)	

^ Significant difference between estimate and Healthy People 2030 target
[1] Point estimates were not evaluated for significance against Healthy People 2030 Target as they were previously evaluated against Healthy People 2020 Target
†Unreliable estimate (Relative Standard Error >0.3)

Health Disparities for Current Cigarette Smokers

Santa Barbara County has met the HP 2030 target of below 6.1% current cigarette smokers at 4.7%, though not statistically significant. Those with the household incomes below $35,000 and those with less than a high school education report the highest percentage of smoking at 11.9% and 12.5%, respectively. In 2022, there was a significant decrease (6.8%) in current cigarette smoking compared to 2019, and the percentage of current smokers is now lower compared to Californians in 2021. Between 2019 and 2022, the prevalence of current cigarette smoking decreased for males and non-Hispanic Whites by 9.8% and 12.9%, respectively.

Most impacted demographic subgroups include those reporting annual household incomes less than $35,000 and those with less than a high school education (see figures below).

Figure 1. 2022 Percent Reporting Current Smoker Status by Demographic Group

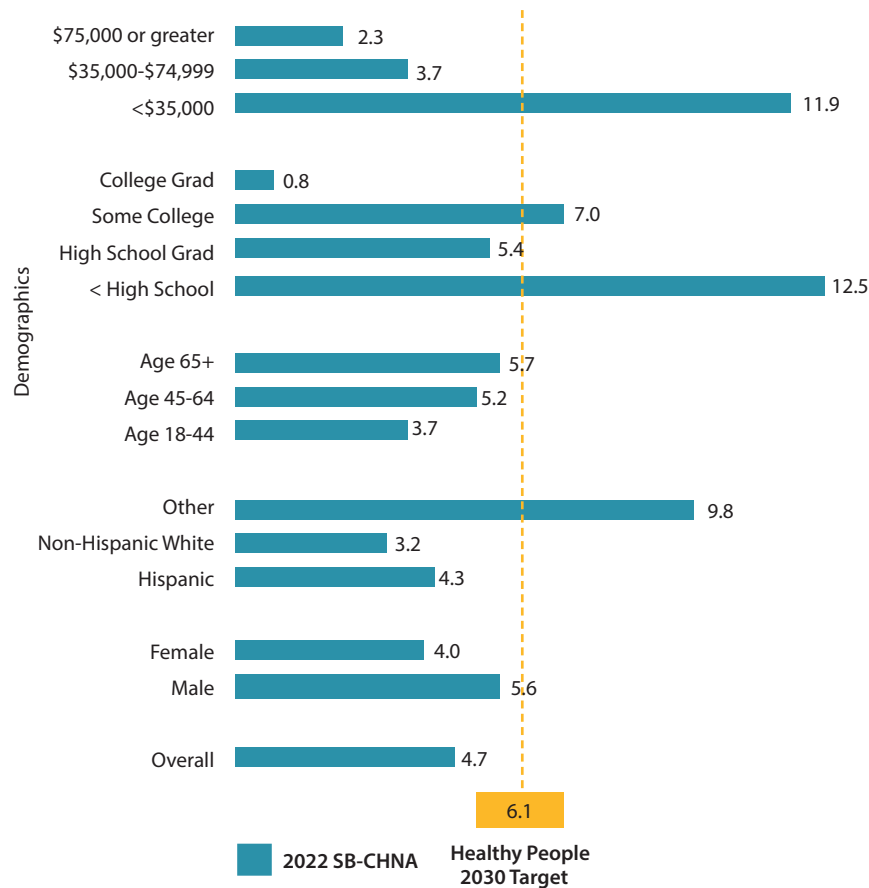| Demographics	2022 SB-CHNA
$75,000 or greater	2.3
$35,000-$74,999	3.7
<$35,000	11.9
College Grad	0.8
Some College	7.0
High School Grad	5.4
< High School	12.5
Age 65+	5.7
Age 45-64	5.2
Age 18-44	3.7
Other	9.8
Non-Hispanic White	3.2
Hispanic	4.3
Female	4.0
Male	5.6
Overall	4.7

Healthy People 2030 Target: 6.1

Figure 2. Percentage of Adults Reporting Current Cigarette Smoker by Sex at Birth

	2016 SB-CHNA	2019 SB-CHNA	2022 SB-CHNA

- Male values: 10.1%, 15.4%, 5.6%
- Female values: 8.5%, 7.4%, 4.0%
- Healthy People 2030 Target: 6.1%

Legend: —— Male —— Female - - - Healthy People 2030 Target
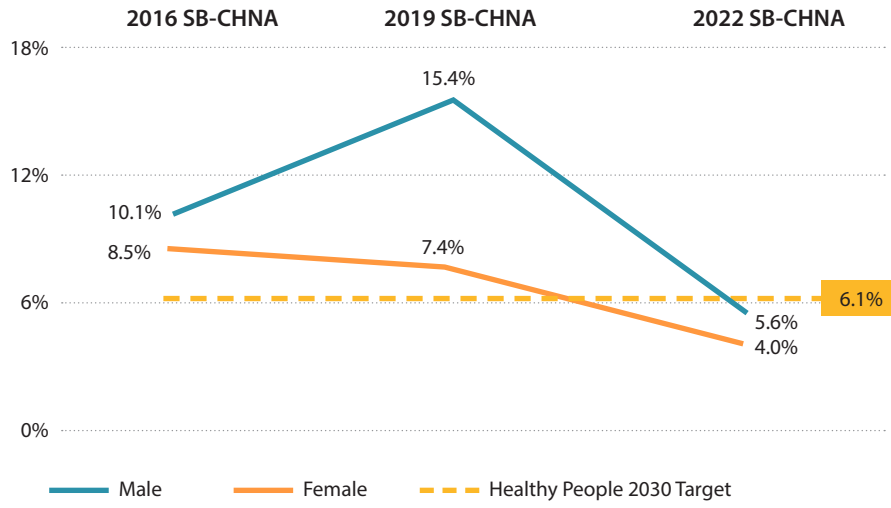
Figure 3. Percentage of Adults Reporting Current Cigarette Smoker by Education Level

	2016 SB-CHNA	2019 SB-CHNA	2022 SB-CHNA

- < High School values: 12.5%, 13.8%, 15.8%
- High School Grad values: 5.4%, 19.0%, 5.2%
- Some College values: 7.0%, 13.2%, 6.6%
- College Grad values: 0.8%, 3.5%, 0.8%
- Healthy People 2030 Target: 6.1%

Legend: —— < High School —— High School Grad —— Some College —— College Grad - - - Healthy People 2030 Target
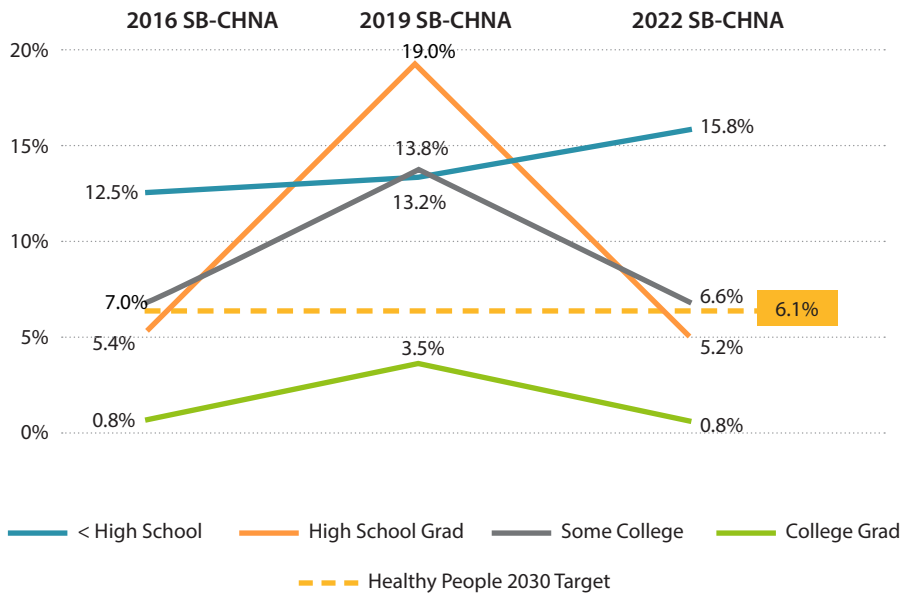
Factors and Health Outcomes Associated with Current Cigarette Smokers

Figure 4 below depicts the two health indicators that were most significantly related to cigarette smoking. Reporting 15 or more poor mental health days in the past 30 days increased the odds of reporting smoking by nine-fold. Being enrolled in Medicaid increased the odds of reporting smoking by five-fold.

Figure 4. Percentage of Adults Reporting Current Cigarette Smoker by Significant Related Factors

Legend: ■ 2022 SB-CHNA   ─ ─ 2022 SB-CHNA Overall   ── 2021 CA-BRFSS Overall
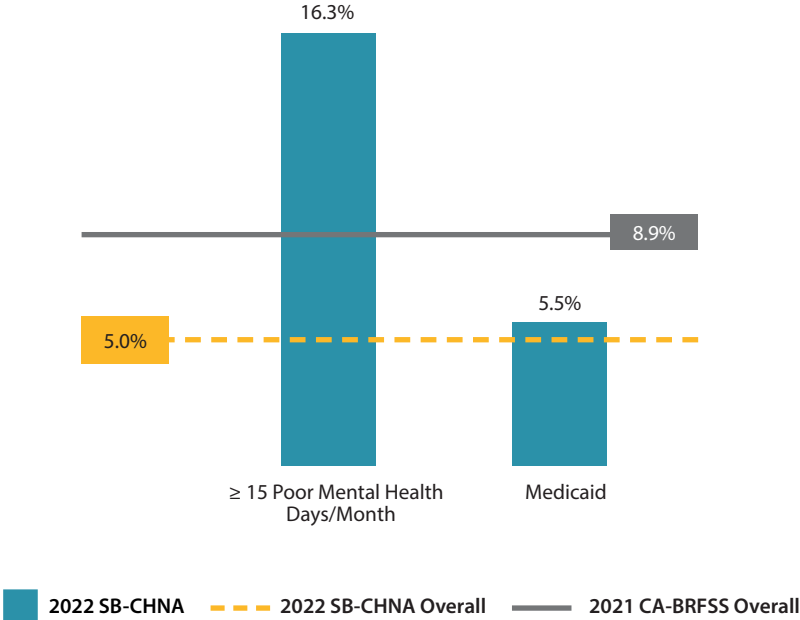
Table 2. Odds Ratio Estimates for Current Cigarette Smoker Status by Significant Related Factors

Significant Related Risk Factor	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Limits	
≥ 15 Poor Mental Health Days/Month	9.5	2.5	35.7
Medicaid	5.4	1.2	22.6
Has no primary care provider	3.5	1.6	7.4
Low resilience	0.3	0.0	1.2

NOTE: The degrees of freedom in computing the confidence limits is 1301.

Measure for Vaping

The prevalence of vaping is based on two questions. The first is: "Have you ever used an e-cigarette or other electronic 'vaping' product, even just one time, in your entire life?" Those respondents that answered yes to the first question were also asked: "Do you now use e-cigarettes or other electronic 'vaping' products every day, some days, or not at all?"

VAPING QUESTIONS

Have you ever used an e-cigarette or other electronic "vaping" product, even just one time, in your entire life?

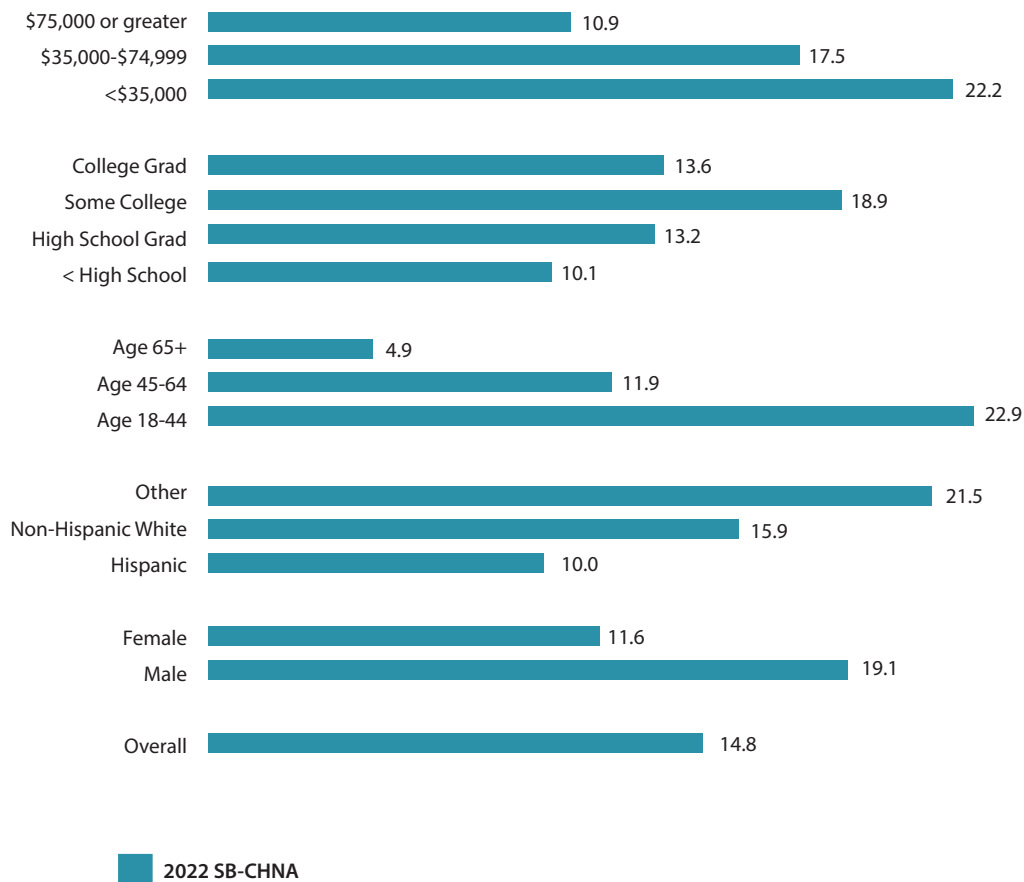## Table 3. Percentage of Adults Reporting Ever Vaping in Santa Barbara County in 2019 and 2022

	2019 Santa Barbara CHNA	2022 Santa Barbara CHNA
	% (95% CI)	% (95% CI)
Overall	23.7 (19.6, 27.8)	14.8 (11.4, 18.3)
Male	31.2 (24.7, 37.8)	19.1 (13.1, 25.1)
Female	16.3 (11.6, 21.1)	11.6 (7.7, 15.5)
Hispanic	21.2 (14.8, 27.6)	10.0 (4.7, 15.3)
Non-Hispanic White	26.7 (20.9, 32.4)	15.9 (11.4, 20.4)
Other	18.0 (3.8, 32.2) †	21.5 (10.7, 32.2)
Age 18-44	32.7 (25.7, 39.6)	22.9 (16.5, 29.4)
Age 45-64	18.5 (12.9, 24.1)	11.9 (6.8, 17.1)
Age 65+	7.9 (3.2, 12.6)	4.9 (0.9, 8.9)
< High School	6.4 (0.3, 12.4) †	10.1 (0.0, 20.6)
High School Grad	28.2 (18.1, 38.3)	13.2 (3.9, 22.4)
Some College	36.7 (28.6, 44.8)	18.9 (11.8, 25.9)
College Grad	15.3 (9.7, 20.9)	13.6 (9.3, 18)
<$35,000	26.8 (19.6, 34.0)	22.2 (13.2, 31.3)
$35,000-$74,999	22.1 (13.2, 31.1)	17.5 (9.7, 25.4)
$75,000 or Greater	21.6 (14.8, 28.4)	10.9 (7.1, 14.7)

† Unreliable estimate (Relative Standard Error >0.3)

Health Disparities for Ever Vaping

The prevalence of vaping has significantly decreased between 2019 and 2022 from 23.7% to 14.8%, respectively. Significant decreases in ever vaping were limited to non-Hispanic Whites, those with some college, and those in households with incomes of $75k or above. Disparities in vaping exist for those aged 18-44 (22.9%) when compared to those 65+ (4.9%). Those age 18-44, those in households with <$35K income, and those who are classified as "Other" in terms of race and ethnicity have the highest prevalence of ever vaping.

Figure 5. 2022 Percentage of Adults Reporting Ever Vaping by Demographic Group

Demographic Group	2022 SB-CHNA
$75,000 or greater	10.9
$35,000-$74,999	17.5
<$35,000	22.2
College Grad	13.6
Some College	18.9
High School Grad	13.2
< High School	10.1
Age 65+	4.9
Age 45-64	11.9
Age 18-44	22.9
Other	21.5
Non-Hispanic White	15.9
Hispanic	10.0
Female	11.6
Male	19.1
Overall	14.8

■ **2022 SB-CHNA**

Findings from the 2022 Santa Barbara County Listening Tour

Through the 2022 Listening Tour, providers and parents identified the central role that nicotine use has in the understanding of well-being. Those who struggle to receive help for vaping and nicotine use for themselves or their family experienced mental health problems and familial issues.

Increasing rates of nicotine use among youth

Listening Tour participants described an increase in youth smoking cigarettes.

They have found cigarette butts where the kids go and play, or at a soccer game, or a basketball game where the kids are supposed to be in a recreational area. And it is alarming because they are finding – and they tell us like this, literally – that they are finding cigarette butts...So yes, yes, yes, it is a very large increase that we are seeing in our community. – North County Parent

Listening Tour participants also cite the increased use of vapes in the county, primarily by youth.

I'm seeing a lot of vaping – vape use. – Physician

Smoking to address mental health needs

Some turn to smoking to cover pain or mental health needs. Friends, family, and professionals who know people that smoke cigarettes are often unable to help smokers to quit, or to find help, especially if they are using it as a coping mechanism.

We see youth attempting to cope the best they can with using substances. Very, very high rates of, you know, just daily, hourly nicotine use, e-cigarette use, as well as THC products, and this past year, year to two years, just the huge spike in youth coming in. – Mental Health Service Provider

A lot of the youth are going through a lot of depression that not even their parents knew they had. So what we are going through in youth depression is very high levels, and it is very sad to see that young people are losing by grabbing a false door like the drugs, like smoking. And that is very sad that I can notice in my community. – North County Parent

There's another way nowadays…you can't tell this guy, "Hey, you stop smoking cigarettes"…People are in so much pain [in their minds] and here in our hearts that it's supposed to be for numbing something else. And they do. – Individual Experiencing Homelessness

Smoking out of boredom

Listening Tour participants hypothesized that users who smoke cigarettes often do so to deal with boredom, especially in more remote areas of the county.

There is nothing to do. Let's go drink a beer and find something to do. So then that is kind of what we did in the summer and not a lot, but we, you know, smoked. I didn't, but sometimes you find your own vices. And that's how substance abuse starts, whether it is alcohol or smoking. – School Administrator

Vaping as a form of bonding

A striking finding is that youth are finding themselves vaping together as a way to connect or relate to one another, even though the youth are aware of the negative consequences for their mental health.

And like a lot of our fun with like smoking, drinking, nicotine vaping or whatever, like a lot of the things that you need to do to connect with people are negative for your mental health…We're just constantly being thrown at different things that are affecting us in negative ways. And then when everyone's doing it, it's hard to see what the right thing is because you're only comparing yourself to your peers. So it's like we're all struggling together. And it's not being addressed, at least by the school. – Student

Youth preferring vaping

Youth in Santa Barbara County prefer vaping when choosing to use substances, causing a decrease in other substance use.

I am seeing a decrease, actually, in substance use with the exception of nicotine use, which has skyrocketed, basically, due to the availability of vaping devices. – Physician

In addition, smoking cigarettes is becoming normalized among the youth in Santa Barbara County, especially when used to deal with mental health disorders.

A lot of the youth are going through a lot of depression that not even their parents knew they had. So what we are going through in youth depression is very high levels, and it is very sad to see that young people are losing by grabbing a false door like the drugs, like smoking. And that is very sad that I can notice in my community. – North County Parent

Conclusions

During the Listening Tour, community members and service providers shared the attractiveness of smoking for youth based on boredom. There was active conversation about the challenges of assisting smokers in quitting smoking. Participants agreed that programs to raise awareness for smoking cessation, provide education, and focus on smoking prevention related to nicotine use, whether it is delivered through traditional cigarettes or e-cigarettes, should increase across the county. These programs should highlight the dangers of e-cigarette devices.