



PRESS RELEASE

Media Inquiries Contact:
health@umatillacounty.net



For Immediate Dispersal:
Dated: May 1, 2023

Re: Umatilla County Offers Education Regarding Teen Vaping Health Threats

A Community Readiness Assessment indicated a need for community education and advocacy to support action on issues surrounding early initiation to tobacco and nicotine products. Many people are unaware of the latest evidence on the harms of vaping and unaware of practices that put teens at risk.

In 2021, UCo Health received funding from the Oregon Health Authority to complete a community readiness assessment in Umatilla County. The Community Readiness Assessment Model (CRAM) is an evidence-based strategy to assess community experiences and guide next steps in awareness and prevention efforts.

UCo Health assessed community readiness for efforts to decrease early tobacco initiation in Umatilla County. Early initiation in this context involves the risk factors that contribute to people using tobacco/nicotine while under the age of 21. Risk factors include exposure to any type of tobacco or nicotine product. Every exposure leads to a reduced perception of risk and a belief that tobacco/nicotine use is normal, which can result in lower levels of resistance for kids. Exposure includes seeing ads and power wall displays at retail locations, using, seeing others use, exposure to secondhand smoke/vapor, and so forth.

The assessment results revealed low community knowledge of efforts to address the issue, low knowledge of the issue and its local prevalence, and an overall low level of community readiness to address the issue. Overall the community leveled at Stage 2 on a scale of 1-9, indicating that some community members recognize that early initiation to tobacco use is a concern, but it needs to be acknowledged that it is locally very problematic. Further education is needed to bring community members to a level of readiness that supports expanded prevention efforts. UCo Health will use these results to guide planning efforts in coordination with community partners through the newly-formed Tobacco Prevention coalition.

In Oregon, 13 through 17-year-olds vape more than either 18 through 24-year-olds or adults 25+. Data shows that youth use flavored tobacco and nicotine products more than adults do. Umatilla County-specific data shows 16.8% of 8th and 24.7% of 11th graders use vape-related products, which is higher than state and national averages. The entire CRAM report can be viewed at www.ucohealth.net.

Sources:

Oregon Student Health Survey; Behavioral Risk Factors
-Surveillance System. Unpublished data.

<https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/le2593Umatilla.pdf>

Oregon Health Authority : Oregon Tobacco Facts : Tobacco Prevention : State of Oregon

-Estimates for older adults are age-adjusted to the 2000 standard population.

<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/ph/preventionwellness/tobaccoprevention/pages/oregon-tobacco-facts.aspx>

200 SE 3rd St., Pendleton, OR 97801

Email: health@umatillacounty.net

Pendleton: 541-278-5432 Hermiston: 541-567-3113 Fax: 541-278-5433

Online: www.ucohealth.net www.facebook.com/umatillacountyhealth