



# RISE News



January 2025



Greetings Rural Partners,  
Welcome in 2025!

We're most likely all busy with reporting and gearing up for another reporting period, so we'll keep it brief this month. We hope 2025 brings you and yours goodness, health, ease and joy!

Warmly,

*Shelly, JoAnn, Sue, & Hayley*

*P.S. Stay tuned for our RISE Up Leadership Academy coming in March, 2025!*

## Upcoming Events



**Coming Soon!**

### **RISE Up Leadership Academy**

**March 2025**

A great opportunity for learning about the uniqueness of tobacco prevention in rural communities, creative and successful strategies, and self-empowerment as a community leader in tobacco prevention.

**Stay tuned!**



### **Rural Initiatives Workgroup (RIW)**

**Tuesday, January 21, 2025**

**3:00 - 4:30 PM**

#### **Topic / Guests**

**Policy? Regulation? Ordinance? An overview of sources of authority in tobacco prevention**

Carolina Saavedra, Senior Staff Attorney, Public Health Law Center

***Young Adult Purchase Surveys (YAPS) & the Role of Law Enforcement (CONT.)***

Nykeia Harris, MPH, CHES, Program Consultant, CTPP

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*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](#).*

**Contact Shelly Brantley**



**Rural Tobacco Cessation Discussion Group  
(Bimonthly)**

February 3, 2025  
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

[Zoom Link](#)

Meeting ID: 854 6565 2523

Passcode: 265859

Phone in: 669-444-9171

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*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.*



**CALIFORNIA TOBACCO  
ENDGAME CENTER FOR  
ORGANIZING AND ENGAGEMENT**  
A project of the American Heart Association.

**Campaign Organizing & Leadership Institute**

Join in this unique learning and interactive experience. The course work will inspire you to refine your organizing and leadership skills, both as an individual leader and an influencer of others – coalition

end commercial tobacco.

**February 11 & 12, 2025**  
**9:00 AM - 3:00 PM**  
(Applications due January 24, 2025)

**Learn More & Register**

## Rural News & Successes

### RISE Material Adopted and Adapted by TECC

Kudos to our rural communities for helping RISE create a much needed educational material - CIGARETTES AND FLAVORED TOBACCO MAKE NO SENSE - which has been adopted and adapted by the Tobacco Education Clearinghouse of California (TECC) and is now available for download.



**Healthy Stores and Healthy Communities Go Hand in Hand**

Rural convenience stores can increase profit margins and revenue without cigarettes and flavored tobacco!

Rural areas need convenience stores to thrive. With the number of grocery stores declining, rural communities rely on other businesses, such as convenience stores.<sup>1</sup> Research shows that convenience stores that adapt to new rules, like banning flavored tobacco products, are doing well even with the decline in tobacco sales.<sup>2</sup> Declines in cigarette sales do not negatively impact retailers. Cigarettes have the lowest profit margin, while food services, such as hot meals and fresh produce, have the highest profit margin.<sup>2</sup>

**Total Cigarette Sales and Number of Convenience Stores**



While the number of convenience stores has been generally rising over time, cigarette sales have been declining steadily over time.<sup>1</sup>

In California, it is illegal for retailers to sell tobacco products to anyone under the age of 21.<sup>3</sup> Under the STAKE Act, tobacco retailers must post an Age-of-Sale Warning Sign at each point of sale and on each vending machine that sells tobacco products.

Order your free sign and other STAKE Act materials at: [tecc.org/state-materials-order-form](http://tecc.org/state-materials-order-form)



**Access Resource Here**

*Want to be highlighted in a future issue of RISE News?*

RISE is always thrilled to highlight your important work! Contact [JoAnn](mailto:JoAnn) with your news and ideas.

*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!*

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## **Holly Laird, MPH**

***Rural & Disability Equity Specialist***

***Office of Health Equity, CDPH***

Holly started her work in tobacco in 2015 serving in the AmeriCorps program in Merced, CA. She volunteered with the local tobacco prevention coalition and surveyed local convenience stores to better understand the marketing and accessibility of tobacco products. “This experience was eye-opening and led me to graduate school to study public health,” she remembered.

and coalition building and saw this work as extremely meaningful.”

While Holly has learned so many important public health, policy change, and community advocacy lessons during her work with tobacco prevention, the most impactful was how

*“I was very proud to be working on local policy and coalition building and saw this work as extremely meaningful.”*

*~ Holly Laird, MPH*

society has been conditioned to think that personal responsibility is the main contributor to poor health outcomes. “It’s our job as public health professionals to dispel this myth and help our communities understand that our environments, which can be influenced by greedy corporations, impact our decisions and our health.”

Holly is the mother of 7-month old Kieran, which takes up most of her free time as of late. “We all enjoy reading books and taking walks around our neighborhood,” she beamed. When not with Kieran, she enjoys snuggling and catching up on TV shows with their three cats, taking tap classes at the local community art center and listening to a wide range of podcasts from pop culture to politics.

Holly worked with RISE (2020-22) as a project coordinator and when that position ended, she was eager to stay involved with the work of the RISE team and the amazing network of rural projects. “Thankfully, I was accepted as an Advisory Committee member [in 2022] and feel extremely grateful to continue learning from and sharing with others working in rural communities.”

When Holly thinks about what could be helpful for new tobacco prevention staff, she hopes they can appreciate all of the learning opportunities the role offers. “There is something for everyone in this work,” she nods. “Find what excites you and lean into it because local policy change can be a lengthy and frustrating process!”

She also agrees that it’s important to take the time to build meaningful community partnerships and learn from peers in rural California communities. “Lastly, though,” she considers thoughtfully, “humility is an important trait to embrace in this work!”

You can reach Holly at [Holly.Laird@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:Holly.Laird@cdph.ca.gov).

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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**

**Shelly Brantley**

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(530) 345-2483 Ext: 216

- [ca-rise.org](http://ca-rise.org)
- [RISE\\_California](#)
- [CA RISE](#)
- [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 Election  
Cycle  
Opportunity**



**Now is the time!**

your project, and your coalition, talk up relevant educational points, such as local use rates, and why prevention is important. Leave any educational fliers that previous elected officials received to help bring them up to speed. They'll most likely thank you because when tobacco prevention topics come up, they'll be prepared to enter the conversation!



## 2025 CSRHA Conference - March 27, 2025 - Lake Natoma Inn, Folsom, CA

This one-day event will bring together rural health leaders, innovators, and advocates to collaborate and share insights on the challenges and opportunities in rural healthcare today. Contact [Shelly Brantley](#) for more information.

### Information & Registration





## 2024 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) Research Report Released

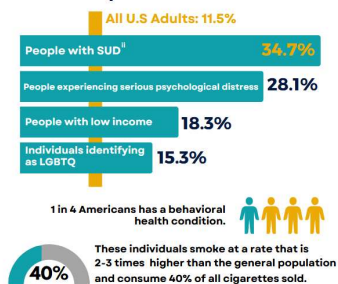
The 2024 Making an Impact report includes publications, CHIS Data, research articles, and more.

### Access the Report

#### Tobacco and Behavioral Health

It's well established that tobacco companies target the most vulnerable members of our communities. That's one reason people experiencing poverty, racism, homophobia, and similar challenges often show higher rates of tobacco use and tobacco-related diseases. Another group that has higher smoking rates and associated illnesses are people experiencing anxiety, depression, trauma, substance use disorders (SUD), and other behavioral health issues.

##### Individuals Who Smoke Cigarettes: By the Numbers<sup>1</sup>



#### Quitting Smoking Benefits All

Smoking can exacerbate mental health conditions and complicate treatment.

Quitting smoking:

- Can improve mental health and SUD recovery outcomes
- Has positive effects on mental health
- Does not interfere with behavioral health treatment or impede recovery from SUDs

#### Resources & Support

The California Center for Tobacco Cessation (CaCTC), housed at UCSF's Smoking Cessation Leadership Center (SCLC), exists to help behavioral health treatment facilities become tobacco-free, connect with cessation services and treatment centers, and provide educational materials promoting tobacco cessation.

CaCTC has produced a toolkit that serves as a resource and guide for behavioral health agencies adopting a tobacco-free wellness policy for their facilities and campuses. It provides information on tobacco use among the behavioral health population, as well as a step-by-step guide to becoming a tobacco-free facility and treating tobacco use in clients and staff.

[Learn more](#)

# TCPRC Summit Summary

The Tobacco Cessation Policy Research Center held its first annual summit in October, 2024. View the summary, which includes highlights of the day's presentations, discussions, and links to materials. View this document in Partners Updates for 12/16/24.



## CA Decoy Program Update

Stay in touch with recruitment efforts and successes for this valuable program.

Subscribe



### **Reminder: RISE is Here to Help!**

Need help building your work plan? Reporting? Learn 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...

[Request Technical Assistance](#)

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