

# EARLY INITIATION TO TOBACCO PRODUCTS COMMUNITY READINESS ASSESSMENT

FALL 2022

## SUMMARY REPORT



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## THE COMMUNITY READINESS MODEL

The Community Readiness Model is adapted from the Tri-Ethnic Community Readiness Assessment developed at Colorado State University. The tool is used to measure the knowledge and level of readiness to address a particular issue in a community. The Community Readiness Model is a theory-driven, community-directed approach that is based on the literature traditions of psychological readiness and community development. The model combines prevention science and community experiences to guide next steps in expanding awareness and prevention efforts.

## USING THE MODEL IN UMATILLA COUNTY

The model is used to measure six dimensions of community readiness:

1. Current Efforts
2. Community Knowledge of the Efforts
3. Leadership
4. Community Climate
5. Community Knowledge About the Issue
6. Resources Related to the Issue

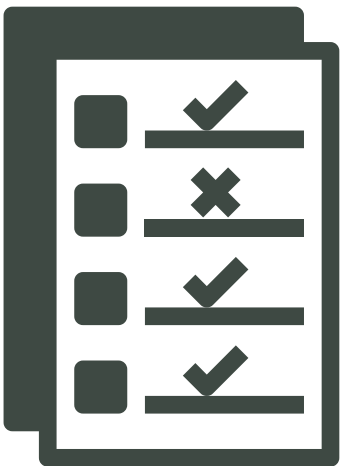
The tool was adapted by UCo Health to measure local readiness in addressing Early Initiation to Tobacco Products in Umatilla County.

## THE PROCESS

- **Local interviews**
- **Scoring, reasoning and planning**



For the 2021-2023 biennium, UCo Health received funding from the Oregon Health Authority to complete a Community Readiness Assessment in Umatilla County. First, we defined what we planned to assess. Early Tobacco Initiation: People under the age of 21 being exposed to ANY type of tobacco, or nicotine product, including smokeless, synthetics and also including all vape products. Every exposure leads to the perception that tobacco/nicotine is normal, and not that harmful, leading to lower levels of resistance. For this reason, ALL exposure counts (seeing ads and retail power walls, using, seeing others use, smelling etc.)



The assessment began with conducting eight interviews of local residents living and working in Umatilla County. Some participants included local government officials, Tribal members, school employees, medical professionals and other community members. After the interviews were completed, a team within UCo Health was tasked with scoring the interviews. Each interview was scored within the six dimensions previously mentioned. The team members worked to score individually, and then together to form a consensus to complete the scoring accurately and objectively. After scoring the interviews, the data was interpreted into the following summary.

# STAGES OF READINESS

## STAGES

## DESCRIPTION

1. No Awareness	Early Initiation is not generally recognized by the community/leaders as an issue.
✓ 2.2 2. Denial/Resistance	Some community members recognize that early initiation to tobacco products is a concern, but little recognition that it occurs locally.
3. Vague Awareness	Most feel that there may be a local concern, but there is no motivation to do anything about it.
4. Preplanning	There is clear recognition that something must be done. However, efforts are not yet focused or detailed.
5. Preparation	Active leaders begin planning in earnest. The community offers modest support.
6. Initiation	Enough information is available to justify efforts. Activities are underway.
7. Stabilization	Activities are supported by Administrators or community decision makers.
8. Confirmation/ Expansion	Efforts are in place. Community members feel comfortable using services and support expansions.
9. High Level of Community Ownership	Detailed knowledge exists about early initiation prevalence and consequences. Evaluation guides new directions.

# SUMMARY OF RESULTS

## Umatilla County Community Readiness: Stage 2.2

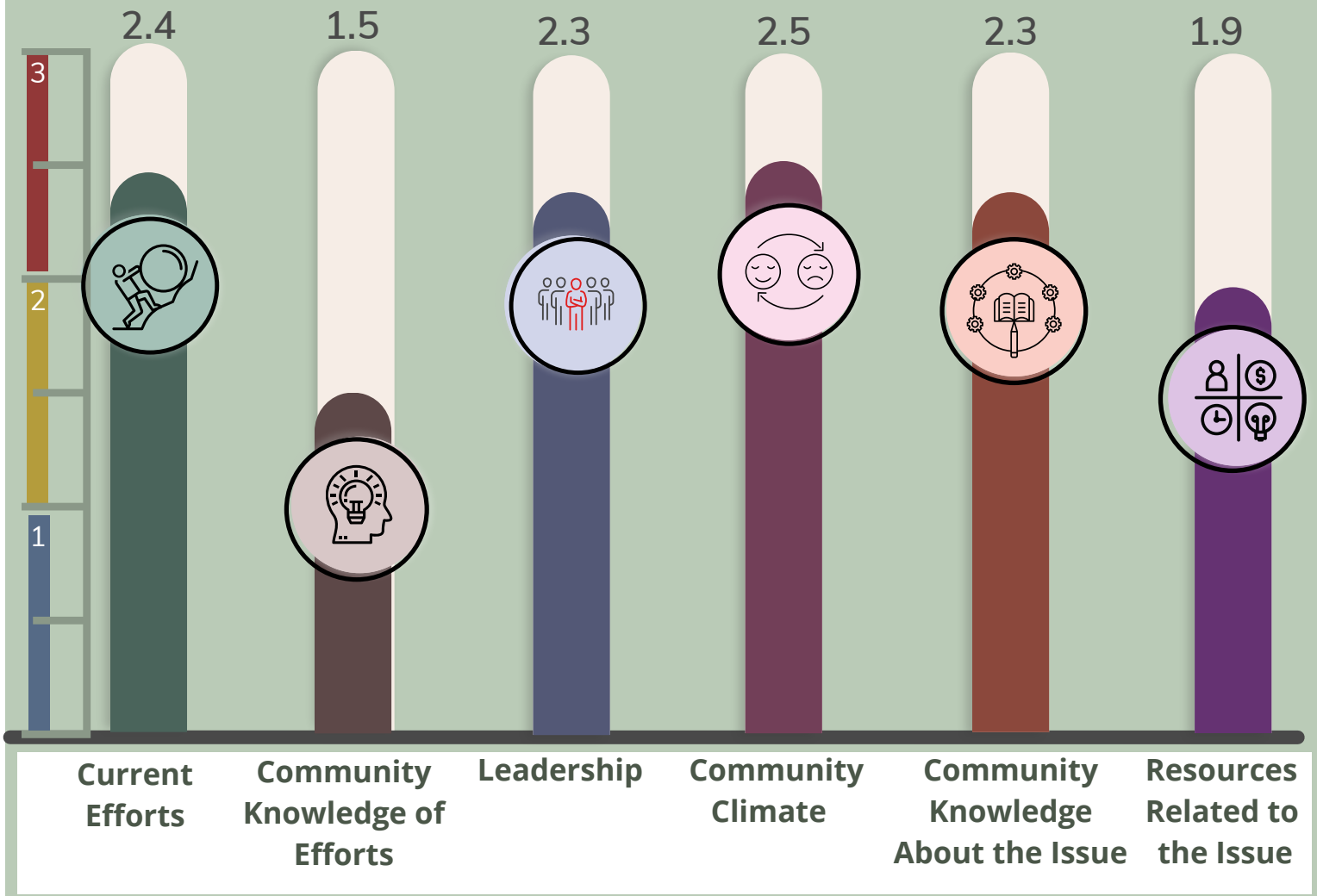
**Stage 2: Denial/ Resistance. Some community members recognize that early initiation to tobacco use is a concern, but there is little recognition that it occurs locally.**

The results revealed low community knowledge of efforts (1.5), low knowledge of the issue (2.3) and an overall low level of community readiness to address the issue (2.2).

Some interviewees expressed that most adults would agree, that early initiation to tobacco is not a good thing. However, several did not see it as a problem locally. Even some who had recognized early initiation locally expressed that people just don't want to have regulations or be told what to do. Another common sentiment is that the community won't support any intervention that might lower the revenue for an established business. Interviewees also mentioned that locally prevalent activities seem to facilitate a culture of tobacco use. Kids don't just see tobacco use at home and then incidentally in public places.

Many are exposed to products in places they frequent for work or recreation. Young adults who work in agricultural settings and who participate in rodeo activities for instance, do not have the benefit of the Indoor Clean Air Act to diminish their exposure. The outdoor places where those activities occur usually do not have tobacco free areas like a building grounds or a campus might.

## Umatilla County Early Initiation to Tobacco Products: Dimensions of Readiness for Prevention Strategies



Results indicate low overall readiness to address the issue in Umatilla County. Community Knowledge of Efforts appears to be the lowest scoring dimension. Many efforts in education and prevention were ceased while all personnel were temporarily assigned to COVID response. Most messaging during that time was also about issues relating to COVID.



## Historical Information and Inferences

Umatilla County has a higher documented rate of tobacco use than Oregon in general (OHA, 2019). This indicates a need for researchers to look for possible reasons for the disparity. Seeing respected adults and leaders regularly use tobacco products reduces the perception of harm, and may contribute to early initiation as a result. Occupations that are thought to perpetuate use of tobacco products could use more outreach for education and prevention purposes.

From 1998, youth tobacco use declined for over a decade. In 2015 the progress began to reverse. Use of nicotine in the form of e-cigarettes by Oregon youth was double the amount who smoked combustibles (OHA, n.d.). This may be in part due to confusion and misinformation, leading to a common notion that vaping is harmless. Other contributing factors seem to be a plethora of kid friendly flavors, and loopholes which kept regulators from responding quickly to innovative products (Fristedt & Zeller, 2022).

Use seemed to peak in 2019. Over 3 times as many 8th graders in **Umatilla County** were using e-cigarettes than were previously using combustibles, and more than 7 times the 11th graders were using e-cigarettes than had used combustibles (OHA, 2019). In 2020, 5.1 percent of **Oregon** 8th graders used e-cigarettes, compared to adult usage at 5.3 percent. As for 11th graders, 11.9 percent used e-cigarettes, more than twice the rate of adult usage (OHA, n.d.).

The commercial tobacco industry used the pandemic to elevate their products and global influence (Burki, 2021). Quantitative data isn't available yet for the past 2 years, but reports from students and teachers have been especially concerning since the pandemic.



A 2004 ordinance in Pendleton was inspired by the realization that many participants in the Pendleton Roundup first tried tobacco at a rodeo when samples were routinely distributed for free. This ordinance made distributing free samples of tobacco products at any Pendleton community event including the rodeo prohibited.

Then Police Chief Stewart Roberts explained in an interview, "It was the right thing to do for the kids" (Smoke Free Oregon, 2014).

Pendleton once stood up to the commercial tobacco industry and no doubt spared a number of our youth. Since then, the industry has found new ways to target youth. The recent addition of a retail license requirement hopefully offers some leverage to enforce age and marketing restrictions. The most recent Tobacco and Alcohol Retail Assessment indicated 30% of retailers in Umatilla County sold tobacco products to minors (OHA).

New strategies may be necessary to make sure the trajectory of tobacco use continues downward. Each measure taken by policymakers seems to upset someone who doesn't want to lose rights. Prevention strategies are intended to keep harmful substances from being easily available and tempting to kids and reduce triggers for those who want to quit.

Ninety percent of those who regularly use tobacco and nicotine started by the time they were 18 (CDC, n.d.). Of those who use tobacco and nicotine products, 70 percent say they wish they had never started, and that they could quit (CDC, 2011).

# UCO HEALTH NEXT STEPS

## **Some of our goals are to increase awareness that:**

- Early initiation to tobacco products is happening at a high rate locally.
- Cigarette use is higher in Umatilla county than the rest of Oregon and the US.
- E-cigarette use for underage youth is higher than for adult use.
- Mental Health is negatively affected by use, and use is perpetuated by stress.
- Usage is a health issue, not a moral one.
- Nicotine damages the youth brain.
- Many of the products on the market have not been cleared for safety.
- Current industry tactics are reminiscent of past deceptions.
- There are strategies we can use to lower risks for our youth.

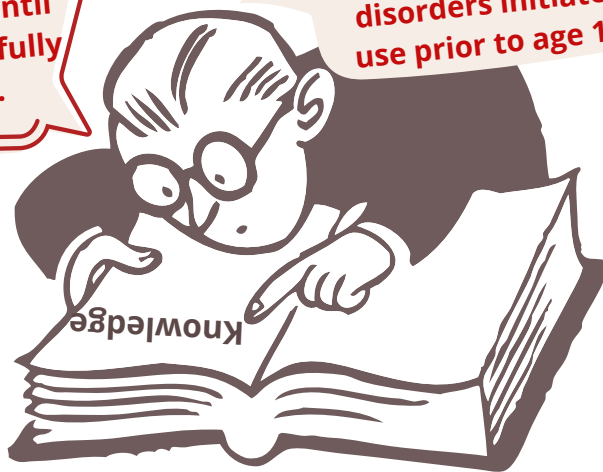
## **Strategies we can use to increase community awareness:**

- UCo Health will be assisting with tobacco prevention in schools through education and prevention strategies.
- A community coalition will be convened for prevention collaboration.
- UCo will offer public outreach and education at community events.
- UCo will explore strategies to increase social media engagement with the public, especially youth.

# WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Nicotine hurts brains which until age 25 are not fully developed.

90% of adults with substance abuse disorders initiated use prior to age 18.



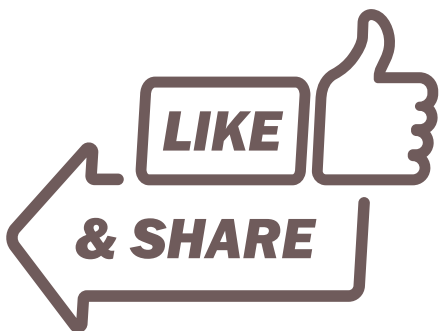
## Build Your Knowledge

- Know what to look for.
- Learn the facts.

## Educate Others

- Talk about health and brain effects of using tobacco and nicotine products.
- Teach and practice refusal skills with young people.
- Encourage cessation.

Please stop using tobacco products where kids watch you. Chances are, some of them look up to you.



## Share & Tell

- Knowledge
- Experience
- Resources
- Media posts and articles



I wish I'd never tried tobacco, I miss my health and it's going to be so hard to quit.

# Prevention Resources

Report Underage or Unlicensed sales to:  
[Tobacco.Inspections@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:Tobacco.Inspections@dhsosha.state.or.us)  
OR 971-673-2283



Report FDA Violations including self service, singles, free samples, flavored cigarettes here:

<https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/ptvr/index.cfm>



What Parents Need to Know  
[tobaccofreekids.org/ecigarettes](http://tobaccofreekids.org/ecigarettes)



Umatilla County Public Health  
<https://ucohealth.net/tobacco-prevention-education>

Truth Initiative  
Text DITCHVAPE to:  
88709 (FREE)

TEEN FREE  
<https://teen.smokefree.gov>



# For More Information, Please Contact

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**2021-2023**

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