



2024 TCPRC SUMMIT
OCTOBER 8TH, 2024



1ST ANNUAL TOBACCO CESSATION SUMMIT



OCTOBER 8, 2024

Background

The Tobacco Cessation Policy Research Center (TCPRC) is a community-academic partnership housed at the UC Davis Comprehensive Cancer Center. Its mission is to advance health care access, delivery, engagement, and equity for tobacco cessation by conducting rapid response policy studies and training the next generation of tobacco cessation researchers and policy advocates. TCPRC is funded by the Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program (grant # T33PC6880). The TCPRC Fall 2024 Summit was an opportunity to learn, engage, and network on tobacco cessation policy issues. Policymakers, researchers, and partners in health care, public health, and education who work on tobacco-related issues were invited to attend. The Summit took place October 8, 2024 at UC Center Sacramento. Plenary presentations were livestreamed.

Participants

Over 200 individuals participated and are categorized by type of organization below:

Organizations	Participants
California Tobacco Prevention Program (CTPP)	29
County health department or other local government	40
Health care organization	41
Nonprofit or other community-based organization	39
School or University	38
Tobacco-Use Prevention Education (TUPE) Program	4
Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program (TRDRP)	5
Other	7
Total	203

PRESENTATIONS



Primo "Lucky" Lara, MD, Director of the UC Davis Comprehensive Cancer Center, opened the Summit and welcomed attendees.



Elisa Tong, MD, Director and Principal Investigator of TCPRC, and Jen Grand-Lejano, MS, of the American Cancer Society, Cancer Action Network and TCPRC Community Principal Investigator, made further opening remarks.



Keynote speaker Brenna VanFrank, MD, MSPH, Senior Medical Officer for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Office on Smoking and Health, gave a comprehensive overview of the state of tobacco cessation in the U.S. She noted that only 38% of tobacco users incorporate evidence-based approaches during a quit attempt, and only 5% use both counseling and medication, which is considered the standard of care. Disparities exist not only in tobacco use but in quit attempts, advice and assistance to quit, and the provision of treatment. To have the greatest positive impact on population health, cessation coverage should be comprehensive, barrier-free, and well promoted. Cessation should be included in all policy efforts restricting the sale or use of tobacco. Dr. VanFrank also noted that many systemic barriers to treatment exist. In California, for example:



- Pharmacists have prescription authority for nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) but not for other cessation medications.
- Behavioral health treatment facilities are not required to have tobacco-free grounds.
- Medi-Cal Managed Care plans are required to offer comprehensive coverage but can impose access barriers such as prior authorization requirements and usage limits.

Next, a panel focused on three public funders of health insurance in California:



Medi-Cal. Cindy Valencia, PhD, Project Director of CA Quits, noted that 1 million of California's 3.4 million tobacco users are covered by Medi-Cal, the state's Medicaid program. Plans are supposed to conduct local needs assessments, which may be an opportunity for stakeholders to advocate for increasing efforts that promote tobacco cessation.



Covered California. Barbara Rubino, MD, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Covered California, noted that the agency covers 7% of the state's population. They actively negotiate with carriers on coverage and can cancel the contracts of underperforming plans. Plans must have a tobacco cessation program with comprehensive coverage, and must show that they are reaching diverse populations.



CalPERS. Julia Logan, MD, MPH, Chief Medical Officer of the California Public Employees' Retirement System, noted that CalPERS has 1.5 million members and is the state's largest purchaser of employer health plans. Plans are required to follow U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) guidelines, and many cover all USPSTF-recommended treatments. CalPERS has a Value-Based Design Program for PPOs with a nonsmoking financial incentive. Plans survey their members annually on tobacco use.

Another panel focused on findings from TCPRC projects in four topic areas:

1

Community Pharmacies. Robin Corelli, PharmD, and Micah Hata, PharmD, reported on an ongoing study assessing the implementation of prescriptive authority for tobacco cessation in community pharmacies. Despite success in incorporating cessation into existing workflows, participating pharmacies have also encountered barriers, such as challenges obtaining reimbursement for their services. The study has demonstrated the importance of engaging pharmacy technicians in the delivery of cessation services.

2

Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment. Erik Tsergounis, PhD, described the results of surveys conducted with SUD treatment programs in Sacramento and Alameda Counties on their tobacco-related needs and practices. Responding programs reported screening for tobacco use and offering treatment, but also identified needs for improving treatment. However, program leadership in general seems to have conflicting priorities.

3

Flavored Tobacco. Melanie Dove, ScD, and Kim Homer Vagadori, MPH, described tobacco industry activities that challenge enforcement of state and local laws restricting the sale of flavored tobacco, such as companies that deliver products to students on university campuses without checking age or charging correct tax, stores that sell prohibited products, and newer products designed to circumvent the law.

4

Cessation Coverage. Michael Ong, MD, PhD, described ongoing work to assess coverage of tobacco cessation treatment in the state's publicly funded health plans. Health insurance agencies may require their plans to provide comprehensive tobacco cessation coverage, but this is not always reflected in plans' evidence of coverage documents, creating a barrier to treatment.

In addition, a lunch session featured several posters by TCPRC trainees.

TCPRC Early Stage Investigator Pilot Award



Maria Garnica Albor, MD

Assistant Professor

Department of Internal Medicine, UC Davis

TCPRC Graduate Opportunities in Leadership Development Award



Shichen Zheng, MPH

PhD Candidate (exp. 2025), Epidemiology

Department of Public Health Sciences, UC Davis

In the afternoon, breakout sessions on the four TCPRC projects provided opportunities for participants to discuss these projects and weigh in on future directions. Following are the likely next steps for the projects.

1	Health care access. The greatest need for increased access to tobacco cessation resources is in rural communities. TCPRC will model working with community pharmacies in rural areas to incorporate cessation counseling and medications into their workflow as a way to build more capacity for cessation.
2	Health care delivery. Few county-level public health programs coordinate closely with their counterparts in behavioral health. TCPRC will work with select counties to foster inter-agency collaboration to increase the delivery of tobacco cessation services in the context of SUD treatment.
3	Health care engagement. State and local policies have been enacted to restrict the sale of flavored tobacco products, and additional bills (AB 3218, SB 1230) recently passed will help close loopholes in the original policies. The greatest need now is enforcement. TCPRC will work to increase community engagement on the enforcement of flavored tobacco restrictions and other policies intended to prevent youth use.
4	Health care equity. A frequently cited barrier to offering tobacco cessation coverage that is comprehensive, barrier-free, and well promoted is concern that the costs of such a program may outweigh the benefits. To help make the business case for such coverage, TCPRC will develop a calculator that allows health plan administrators to estimate their return on investment (ROI), in both the short term and the long term.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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TCPRC MATERIALS

- TCPRC Policy Briefs: bit.ly/tcprc2024
- Summit [Presentations and Recordings](#)
- Summit [Posters](#)