SRNT HEALTH DISPARITIES NETWORK

Issue #4, 2026

SRNT Health Disparities Network members,

Welcome to the fourth issue of the 2026 HDN Newsletter!

As the network continues to grow and evolve, so too does this newsletter. Our hope is to make it the central hub where members can be informed, discover new research, and connect with the people and initiatives shaping our network.

To continue to make the newsletter valuable to you, we encourage you to share announcements, opportunities, and other information with us through this **link**. Your contributions help ensure that the newsletter reflects the breadth and vibrancy of our network.

In this issue, we want to introduce you to the evaluation sub-committee and the amazing work they do to help make the HDN network a vibrant and productive part of SRNT. Starting from this issue, we will also highlight our members including the 2026 HDN travel scholarship awardee. Until our next issue in October, enjoy summer and stay connected with HDN on LinkedIn and Bluesky.



REMINDER!

2027 SRNT Health Disparities Network Travel Scholarship

The Health Disparities Network Scholarship & Development Subcommittee is pleased to announce that **Travel Scholarship funds will be available** for a limited number of early-career scholars attending the 2027 SRNT Annual Meeting in San Francisco, CA. The scholarship is aimed at promoting participation and engagement among **early-stage investigators, postdocs, graduate students, and people from low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) engaged in health disparities research**. Since the program began in 2007, it has supported more than 150 scholars.

Applicants must have an accepted abstract for the 2027 meeting and submit a separate scholarship application. Be on the lookout for details on eligibility, application process, and timeline. **Applications are expected to be reviewed in early fall, with awardees announced in late November–early December**. Questions may be directed to Dina M. Jones at dinamjones@uabmc.edu.

Hot off The Press - Recent Equity-Related Publications

Rural e-cigarette use higher than urban across age groups

Gwon J, Cho Y, Carroll D, Busch A, Noonan D





Introduction

- Rural communities have consistently higher cigarette smoking prevalence than urban communities.
- Less is known about rural–urban disparities in e-cigarette use across specific age groups, especially young adults, who have the highest e-cigarette use prevalence.

Methods

- The study examined rural–urban differences in e-cigarette use across four age groups: 18–24, 25–44, 45–64, and ≥65 years.
- Data were from 2022–2023 Tobacco Use Supplement to the Current Population Survey.
- Outcomes of interest included e-cigarette use (lifetime, former, and current), age, and urban–rural residence.

Relevant Findings

- Current ENDS use was **higher in rural** than urban adults across most age groups, with **rural young adults emerging as a priority population for prevention and cessation** (highest prevalence for lifetime and current use).
- **Age-specific prevention and cessation strategies tailored to rural contexts** are warranted.

Gwon J, Cho Y, Carroll D, Busch A, Noonan D. Rural e-cigarette use higher than urban across age groups. Nicotine & Tobacco Research. Published online July 1, 2026. https://doi.org/10.1093/ntr/ntag153

Flavour and brand of nicotine pouches used most often among US adolescents

Sanchez LM, Miech RA, Bae D, et al



Introduction

- Nicotine pouches have become popular among young people in the U.S.
- There is limited nationally representative data on which nicotine pouch flavours and brands adolescents use most often.
- Timely surveillance can inform FDA's (re)evaluation of regulatory decisions.

Methods

- Data are from the 2025 Monitoring the Future study; nationally representative probability survey of U.S. 8th, 10th, and 12th-grade stuents.
- Students who indicated lifetime use of nicotine pouch responded to two forced-choice survey items assessing the flavor and brand of nicotine pouch used often.
- Percentage prevalence was estimated overall and by demographic characteristics.

Relevant Findings

- **In 2025**, among MTF respondents overall, **5.4% of youth reported nicotine pouch use.**
- Youth **use of non-tobacco-flavoured pouches was nearly universal** (97.0%) among pouch users.
- **Mint** was the **most common flavor** (58.6%) reported **followed by fruit flavor** (16%).
- **Flavoured nicotine pouch** use prevalence **exceeded 93% in every demographic**.

"Among US pouch-using adolescents in 2025, flavoured pouch use was nearly universal and highly concentrated within a single brand, ZYN.... these findings underscore the potential impact of flavours and a single market-leading brand in a nation's scope of youth nicotine pouch use."

Sanchez LM, Miech RA, Bae D, et al. Flavour and brand of nicotine pouches used most often among US adolescents, 2025. Tobacco Control. Published online July 1, 2026. https://doi.org/10.1136/tc-2026-060115

Recent Equity-Related Publications

1. Discrimination experiences are associated with same-day and next-day smoking among adults with low socio-economic status trying to quit: A secondary analysis of data from a randomized clinical trial. Addiction (Abingdon, England), 121(8), 2197–2209. https://doi.org/10.1111/add.70419.

2. The impact of postpartum smoking on breastfeeding initiation and duration: racial and ethnic analysis using PRAMS data in a nationally representative sample. International breastfeeding journal, 21(1), 70. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13006-026-00871-4 .

3. Socioeconomic and smoking-related disparities in lung cancer prevalence among U.S. adults: A pooled analysis of the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2022–2024. Preventive Medicine Reports. 2026;68:103563. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmedr.2026.103563.

4. Associations between recreational cannabis legalization and disparities in prenatal tobacco and cannabis use. Nicotine & Tobacco Research. https://doi.org/10.1093/ntr/ntag138

5. Demographic predictors of menthol cigarette and flavored e-cigarette restriction policy support among a cross-sectional sample of U.S. adults. BMC public health, https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-026-28547-y.

6. Sex differences in the association between major depression episode and nicotine vaping among United States youth, 2021–2024. Nicotine & Tobacco Research. https://doi.org/10.1093/ntr/ntag170.

7. Zyn and other oral nicotine pouch use, correlates, and advertising exposure among a national sample of United States adolescents, young adults and adults. Addiction. https://doi.org/10.1111/add.70530.

8. A mixed-methods evaluation of a patient navigation intervention to support lung cancer prevention in LGBTQ+ adults. Nicotine & Tobacco Research. https://doi.org/10.1093/ntr/ntag136.

9. Using aggregated ethnicity categories masks inequalities in smoking prevalence in England. Addiction (Abingdon, England), 121(8), 2234–2241. https://doi.org/10.1111/add.70427.

10. Racial disparities in tobacco smoking-related risks for lung cancer: A systematic review & meta-analysis. Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40615-026-03030-x.

11. Pre-pregnancy depression, prenatal care, and e-cigarette/cigarette use during late pregnancy among adolescents. Nicotine & Tobacco Research. https://doi.org/10.1093/ntr/ntag104.

12. The Association Between Posttraumatic Stress and Cigarette Smoking From an Ethnicity and Gender Perspective: Findings From a Longitudinal Study of U.S. Adolescents. Stress Health. https://doi.org/10.1002/smi.70191

13. Lung cancer screening disparities among screening-eligible older Black adults with 20+ years of tobacco use: Quantitative findings from a mixed-methods, quasi case-control study. Cancer Causes Control. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10552-026-02214-4

Recent Equity-Related Publications - (cont'd)

14. Chronic Disease-Related Social and Behavioral Risk Factors and Conditions Among Non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaska Native People: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2011–2023. Am J Public Health. https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2026.308474

15. Assessing the abuse liability of U.S. Food and Drug Administration-authorized electronic nicotine delivery systems: Impact of nicotine flux, flavor, and menthol cigarette smoking status. Exp Clin Psychopharmacol. https://doi.org/10.1037/pha0000861.

16. Tobacco Use Among Middle and High School Students: 2025 National Youth Tobacco Survey. Pediatrics. https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2026-077008

17. Social norms and the decline in US cigarette smoking: evidence from 30 years of US representative surveys. BMJ Public Health. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjph-2024-002389

18. Youth's perception of parental limitation of youth screen time is associated with lower odds of nicotine vaping among US youth: Results from the 2024 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). Drug Alcohol Depend. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2026.113260.

19. Predictors of Adolescent Intentions to Quit Vaping Nicotine. J Adolescent Health. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2026.05.016.

Member Spotlight: HDN Travel Scholarship Awardee



Yaw Barima Twum, PhD | Postdoctoral Fellow | Bitzer Lab | Penn State College of Medicine

Academic background and current affiliation?

I hold a Ph.D. in Occupational and Environmental Health Sciences from West Virginia University. I completed a Master's degree in Occupational Medicine from the University of Ghana and hold a Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB) from the University of Cape Coast. I work within the Tobacco Center of Regulatory Science (TCORS) on projects focused on biomarkers, oxidative DNA damage, and epigenetic changes using both in vitro and in vivo models.

What led you to pursue a career in health equity research and tobacco-related disparities in particular?

My interest in health equity research and tobacco-related disparities in particular emerged from my early clinical experiences. While practicing medicine in Ghana, I witnessed firsthand how social and structural factors shape people's exposure to toxicants and limit their access to healthcare. These experiences made it clear that health outcomes are influenced not only by individual physiology, but also by inequities in resources, policies, and lived conditions.... Ultimately, I am driven by the belief that advancing health equity requires both rigorous, evidence-based research and policy-relevant insights. Tobacco-related disparities lie at the intersection of these priorities, and my goal is to generate research that informs effective interventions, protects vulnerable populations, and promotes more equitable health outcomes.

How has receiving the HEN travel scholarship benefited your work/career?

Receiving the HEN travel scholarship has been tremendously valuable for my professional development. It enabled me to attend the SRNT 31st Annual Meeting in Maryland, engage directly with leaders in the field, and learn about emerging research in tobacco control and health equity. The experience strengthened my scientific network, opened doors for new collaborations, and exposed me to innovative approaches that are shaping the future of regulatory science.

Click to read Dr. Yaw Barima Twum's full length spotlight article on SRNT HDN webpage.

Member Spotlight: HDN Travel Scholarship Awardee



Wilson Figueroa, PhD | T32 NRSA NCI Postdoctoral Fellow | Wexner Medical Center Comprehensive Cancer Center, The Ohio State University

Academic background and current affiliation?

I am a behavioral scientist with a PhD in Experimental Health Psychology and currently a T32 NRSA NCI postdoctoral fellow at the Wexner Medical Center Comprehensive Cancer Center, The Ohio State University.

What led you to pursue a career in health equity research and tobacco-related disparities in particular?

I pursue health equity research — and tobacco-related disparities specifically — because I want to understand and address how chronic stress drives cancer-related behaviors like tobacco use. The populations I study (sexual and gender minority and rural adolescents and young adults) face unique, elevated stressors that increase their risk for tobacco use and its downstream harms. My work focuses on identifying those stress–behavior pathways and developing culturally responsive, equitable interventions that improve stress coping and reduce tobacco use in these communities.

How has receiving the HEN travel scholarship benefited your work/career?

Receiving the HEN travel scholarship enabled me to attend SRNT for the first time and significantly advanced my career. I made valuable professional connections and gained two new mentors, Dr. Erin Vogel and Dr. Katelyn Romm. I am actively collaborating with them on an abstract (to submit to SRNT) and a manuscript using Dr. Romm's dataset. The experience expanded my network, strengthened my mentorship team, and created concrete research opportunities that accelerate my development as an independent investigator.

Click to read Dr. Wilson Figueroa's full length spotlight article on SRNT HDN webpage.

Meet The Sub-Commitee: Evaluation Subcomittee

Our goal is to evaluate the effectiveness of Network activities, including pre-conference workshops, the *It's Just Coffee* mentoring program, the Travel Scholars program, the Advisory Committee (AC), and other activities.

Leadership

Lauren Czaplicki
Erin Mead-Morse
Meng Yang
And many volunteers!

Highlight of Upcoming Activities

We will conduct our annual evaluation of the Network's pre-conference workshop in 2027 and complete the analysis of the Travel Scholars program evaluation (2009-2025). We also have two new exciting initiatives:

- In Aug 2026, we launched our 1st AC Exit Survey, which we will send to all members who are rolling off the AC. We are using it to learn about their experiences so that we can make sure others have the best possible experience.
- In 2026, we've been working hard on a short-term project requested by the AC: A narrative review of health equity and disparities related publications in NTR. The goal is to provide an overview of the papers published on disparities and highlight research gaps. This effort has been led by volunteers Elizabeth Do and Minal Patel. We are planning to submit a commentary to NTR by the end of the year.

If you're interested in getting involved with the subcommittee, please email Lauren Czaplicki (lczapli1@jhu.edu), Erin Mead-Morse (mead@uchc.edu), and Meng Yang (my397@msstate.edu).

Past Year's Accomplishments

- We completed analysis of the *It's Just Coffee* program based on responses from mentee/mentors participating from 2019-2023. Although the sample size of respondents was small, we were able to share recommendations with the Scholarship & Development Committee on how to promote the program to encourage mentors and mentees at all stages of their career.
- We conducted an evaluation of the 2026 Health Equity Network pre-conference workshop "Tobacco and Cannabis Co-Use through a Health Equity Lens" at the SRNT Annual Meeting. Highlights include: participants reported that it was superior quality (4.7/5), and participants rated themselves as very knowledgeable (3.7/5) after the workshop (2.7 before)
- We fielded a survey in Aug 2026 to collect data from Travel Scholarship recipients (2009-2025). We collected information on the impact of the Scholarship on their career and continued participation in SRNT broadly and the activities of the Health Disparities Network. Overall, 52/144 recipients (36%) completed the survey and analysis is underway. We plan to share findings with members of the Scholarship & Development Committee and publish results in *Nicotine and Tobacco Research (NTR)*.