



CoNECTR NEWSLETTER

Colorado Nicotine E-Cigarettes and Tobacco Research Alliance

Issue: August 2025

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Greetings from CoNECTR Director

We are pleased to share our next quarterly newsletter with you. We have some great research to highlight from colleagues across the institution under Recent Publications. Tobacco products and cessation treatments have been in the news. A new drug application for the smoking cessation medication cytisinicline has been submitted to the FDA. Data came out this quarter on rising oral nicotine pouch prevalence. An RCT testing varenicline as a vaping cessation treatment among youth has demonstrated safety and efficacy in promoting long-term cessation from nicotine. In case you missed it, our colleagues at the Behavioral Health and Wellness Program presented an educational talk on psychedelic treatment for nicotine dependence, see the link below.

Do you have tobacco or nicotine research that you'd like us to feature? Email us at gina.kruse@cuanschutz.edu

Gina Kruse, MD, MS, MPH
Director of [CoNECTR](#)

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CoNECTR Vision and Mission

Vision: To facilitate innovative transdisciplinary research, in partnership with clinical care and public health, to reduce inequity, illness, and death caused by tobacco and nicotine products.

Mission Statement: To cultivate innovative and impactful tobacco and nicotine research in our community of scientists, spanning disciplines from basic science to clinical and population-based research. We seek to grow a pipeline of scientists and practitioners partnered with our community. Our work is driven by the needs of all Coloradans, with the overarching goal of reducing health inequity and harm of commercial tobacco and nicotine products.

INVESTIGATOR SPOTLIGHT

Patricia Valverde, PhD MPH

Master of Public Health Director
Colorado School of Public Health, University of Northern Colorado

Dr. Patricia Alvarez Valverde is a nationally recognized leader in patient navigation and community health workers. She directs the [Patient Navigator and Community Health Worker Training Program \(PNCT\)](#), a program that provides national leadership in developing, educating, and sustaining the patient navigation and community health workers workforce. She managed a five-year National Cancer Institute clinical trial on patient navigation at Denver Health and Hospital and continues to develop innovative models that improve access and equity in healthcare delivery.

Dr. Valverde also specializes in tobacco and nicotine control with a focus on Latinx and low-income populations. A trained tobacco treatment specialist, Dr. Valverde leads research on vaping and cessation interventions. She chaired and served on the Colorado Tobacco Review Committee for the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, guiding funding to statewide tobacco prevention and control.

Her national collaborations include implementing health navigators for Rural Native Veterans through the Veterans Health Administration and training kidney condition navigators to address structural racism in healthcare.

[View Dr. Valverde's Profile](#)



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NEWS AND POLICY

Smoking cessation aid Cytisinicline up for FDA review

HCP Live

By Victoria Johnson

June 27, 2025

A form of the cytisine regimen, widely used in Eastern Europe for decades, is finally being put in front of US regulators after recently also becoming available in the UK.

- Cytisinicline, a plant-based alkaloid, targets nicotine dependence by binding to nicotinic acetylcholine receptors with high affinity.
- ORCA-3 trial demonstrated significant improvements in smoking abstinence and reduced cravings with cytisinicline compared to placebo.
- The NDA submission aims to provide a new treatment option for nicotine dependence, addressing a major public health challenge.
- Achieve Life Sciences emphasizes the urgent need for effective smoking cessation therapies due to the substantial health burden of smoking-related illnesses.

[Read the News Article](#)

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No ‘pass/fail’ for smoking cessation

I.M. Matters from ACP

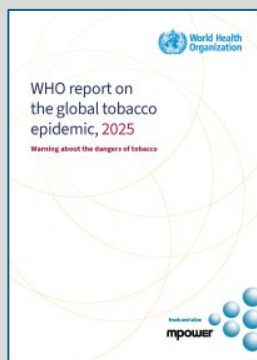
By Charlotte Huff

July/August 2025

By devoting even a few minutes to exploring a patient’s openness to quitting—a “pre-quit approach”—physicians can potentially make a powerful difference.

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WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic, 2025: warning about the dangers of tobacco

World Health Organization

23 June, 2025

The tenth WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic tracks the progress made by countries in tobacco control since 2008. The MPOWER technical package was designed to help countries adopt the demand-reduction measures of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

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EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

Highlights from Grand Rounds featuring Dr. Gina Kruse and Anne Frank: “E-cigarettes: Use patterns, health effects & cessation treatments”

June 25, 2025

Dr. Gina Kruse is a Professor of Medicine, in the Division of General Internal Medicine and Director of the CoNECTR program. Dr. Anne Frank is an Associate Professor of Medicine in the Division of General Internal Medicine and she practices General Pediatrics and Denver Health

This event was hosted by Denver Health

[Watch the Recording](#)



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Highlights from special lecture by Dr. Lisa Sanderson Cox: “Reducing Cancer Risk in Black Adults by Enhancing Tobacco Treatment”

May 28, 2025

Lisa Sanderson Cox, PhD is a Professor of Population Health at the University of Kansas School of Medicine, Associate Director of the Frontiers Clinical and Translational Science Institute at the University of Kansas, and a member of the Cancer Control Program at the University of Kansas Cancer Center. She is dedicated to improving tobacco use treatment for African American and Latino adults, cancer patients, and other underserved populations. This event was sponsored by the Cancer Prevention and Control Program at UC Cancer Center

[Watch the Recording](#)

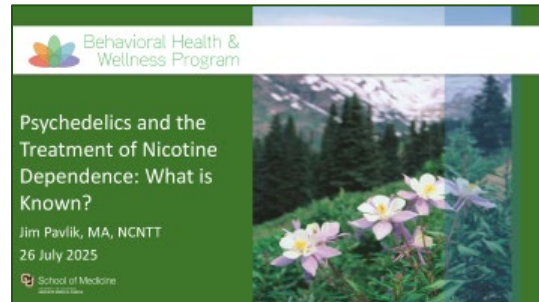


Highlights from online seminar “Psychedelics and the Treatment of Nicotine Dependence: What is Known?”

July 26, 2025

Jim Pavlik, MA NCNTT, is a Sr. Program & Policy Analyst with the Behavioral Health & Wellness Program (BHWP) at the University of Colorado. This event is part of the [BHWP Clinical Edge Webinar Series](#)

[Watch the Recording](#)



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Upcoming Conferences

[National Conference on Tobacco or Health](#) (August 26-28, 2025, Chicago, IL)

[Public Health in the Rockies](#) (September 9 - 11, 2025, Keystone, CO)

[American Public Health Association Annual Meeting](#) (November 2 - 5, 2025, Washington, D. C.)

[World Conference on Tobacco Control \(International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease\)](#) (June 23 - 25, 2025, Dublin, Ireland)

[World Conference on Lung Health \(International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease\)](#) (November 18 - 22, 2025, Copenhagen, Denmark)

[Academy of Health Annual Conference on the Science of Dissemination and Implementation in Health](#) (December 14-17, 2025, National Harbor, MD)

[The European Conference on Tobacco or Health \(ECToH\)](#) (Spring 2026, Milan, Italy)

[Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco](#) (March 4 - 6, 2026, Baltimore, MD)

[American Society of Preventive Oncology](#) (April 12 - 14, 2026, Denver, CO)

[Society of Behavioral Medicine](#) (April 22 – 25, 2026, Chicago, IL)

[American Society of Addiction Medicine](#) (April 20 - 23, 2025, Salt Lake City, UT)

[Society for Prevention Research](#) (May 26 -29, 2026 , Washington, DC)

[Thomas L. Petty Aspen Lung Conference](#) (June 2026, Aspen, CO)

[American Thoracic Society](#) (May 15 - 20, 2025, Orlando, FL)

[Behavior Genetics Association](#) (TBA 2026, Minneapolis, MN)

[Society for General Internal Medicine](#) (May 6 - 9, 2026, Washington, DC)

Explore Tobacco-Focused Sessions at [Public Health in the Rockies 2025](#)

Tobacco Use among Colorado's LGBTQIA+ Community

Sarah DeLong, MPH - Mile High Behavioral Healthcare

Tue 9/9/25 | 3:00pm – 3:30pm MDT

The Fight to End Flavored Tobacco Sales in Denver: A Story of Resilience and Equity

Ms. Jodi L. Radke MNM - Regional Director, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

Tue 9/9/25 | 3:45pm – 4:15pm MDT

Tobacco Free Schools Program Evaluation: Lessons Learned in Sustainable Student Led Prevention Efforts

Jennifer Lange, MS - El Paso County Public Health

Ivelisse Nieves-Ryan, BS - El Paso County Public Health

Aaron Sanborn, DNP MPH - University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

Thu 9/11/25 | 11:15am – 11:45am MDT

Protecting Future Generations: Strategic Partnerships in Youth Tobacco Prevention that Enhance Community Resiliency

Ruth Kadima, MS - Adams County Health Department

Devan Lorimer, MPH - Arapahoe County Public Health

Sue Howk, RD - Arapahoe County Public Health

Haley Foster LPC - Aurora Partners for Thriving Youth

Libby Harrington, MPH - Adams County Health Department

Tue 9/11/25 | 12:00pm – 12:30pm MDT

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RECENT PUBLICATIONS

To share the great work around campus we have created a search to identify the new tobacco and nicotine research published by University of Colorado researchers. Please send us additional papers to highlight, it will help us to refine our search.

Cheng D, Lee B, Jeffers AM, Stover M, Kephart L, Chadwick G, **Kruse GR**, Evins AE, Rigotti NA, Levy DE. State E-Cigarette Flavor Restrictions and Tobacco Product Use in Youths and Adults. JAMA Netw Open. 2025;8(7):e2524184. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2025.24184.

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2836918>

Kruse GR, Chadwick G, Stover M, Reitan CA, Lopez Mendez V, Lee B, Meaney M, Chien HY, Goldberg SL, Evins AE, Rigotti NA, Levy DE. "US state implementation of policies restricting sales of flavoured E-cigarettes: a qualitative analysis". Tob Control. 2025 Jul 3;tc-2025-059349. doi: 10.1136/tc-2025-059349. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40588348; PMCID: PMC12276937.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40588348/>

Genade LP, Steiner L, Nabeemeeah F, Niaura RS, Nonyane BAS, Hoffmann CJ, Sohn H, Kemp CG, Guastaferro K, Mlambo L, Chetty D, Waja Z, Martinson N, Golub JE, **Elf JL**. "Evaluating smoking cessation interventions for people living with HIV in a factorial randomised clinical trial in South Africa using the Multiphase Optimization Strategy (MOST) framework: The Tlogela Trial protocol." Contemp Clin Trials. 2025 Jun 19;107985. doi: 10.1016/j.cct.2025.107985. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40543725.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S155171442500179X?via%3Dihub>

Keke C, Lebina L, Motlhaoleng K, Niaura R, Abrams D, Variava E, Gupte N, Golub JE, Martinson NA, **Elf JL**. “The Nicotine Metabolite Ratio and Response to Smoking Cessation Treatment Among People Living with HIV Who Smoke in South Africa.” *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2025 Jun 30;22(7):1040. doi: 10.3390/ijerph22071040. PMID: 40724106; PMCID: PMC12294352. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12294352/>

Hoang TT, Cosin-Tomas M, Lee Y, Monasso G, Xu Z, Li SS, Zeng X, **Starling AP**, Reimann B, Röder S, Zillich L, Jima DD, Thio CHL, Pesce G, Kersten ETG, Breeze CE, Burkholder AB, Lee M, Ward JM, Consortium B, Alfano R, Deuschle M, Duijts L, Ghassabian A, Herrera LG, Jaddoe VW, Motsinger-Reif AA, Lie RT, Nawrot TS, Page CM, Send TS, Sharp G, Stein DJ, Streit F, Sunyer J, Wilcox AJ, Zar HJ, Koppelman GH, Annesi-Maesano I, Corpeleijn E, Snieder H, Hoyo C, Hüls A, Sirignano L, Witt SH, Herberth G, Plusquin M, **Dabelea D**, Yeung E, Wiemels JL, Richmond RC, Taylor JA, Felix JF, Håberg SE, Bustamante M, London SJ. “Prenatal Smoking Exposures and Epigenome-wide Methylation in Newborn Blood.” *Environ Health Perspect*. 2025 Jun 6. doi: 10.1289/EHP16303. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40478623. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40478623/>

Bolaji O, Bahar AR, Bahar Y, **Areoye G**, Osei AD, Adeboye AA, Mazimba S. “Vaping and Heart Failure: A Narrative Review.” *Cardiol Rev*. 2025 Jun 6. doi: 10.1097/CRD.0000000000000961. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40476828. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40476828/>

Santa Barbara NJ, St Hilaire MA, Konkle-Parker DJ, Comulada WS, Cantrell J, D'Souza A, Foronjy R, Koletar SL, Mimiaga MJ, Palella FJ Jr, Merenstein D, Rubtsova AA, Raju S, Martinez CA, Hanna DB, Drummond MB, Weber KM, Wang R, **Erlandson KM**. “Physical Activity, Cigarette Smoking, and Depression Among People with HIV.” *AIDS Behav*. 2025 Apr 29. doi: 10.1007/s10461-025-04727-6. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40299258. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40299258/>

vanDellen MR, Wright JWC, Hampton BM, **Ranby KW**, Beach SRH, Shen Y, MacKillop JM. “Mechanisms of change in a randomized control pilot study of partner-involved financial incentive treatments for dual-smoking couples.” *Health Psychol*. 2025 Apr 17. doi: 10.1037/hea0001505. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40244984. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40244984/>

Orfin RH, **Alaniz-Cantú EI**, Ramos-Santiago JW, Martinez C, Guerra D, Ramos-Pibernus AG, Sartes LMA, Li D, McIntosh S, Ossip DJ, Cupertino AP, Cartujano-Barrera F. “Assessing Text Messaging Interactivity with a Vaping Cessation Intervention Among Latino Young Adults: A Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis.” *Subst Use Misuse*. 2025;60(7):989-993. doi: 10.1080/10826084.2025.2478593. Epub 2025 Mar 15. PMID: 40089384. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40089384/>

Qadir N, Palacio C, **Fuest S**. “EBM BLS: E-Cigarettes and Varenicline are Both Effective for Smoking Cessation.” *J Gen Intern Med*. 2025 May;40(7):1663-1664. doi: 10.1007/s11606-025-09354-4. Epub 2025 Feb 27. PMID: 40016379; PMCID: PMC12052670. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40016379/>

Krienke M, **Fuest S**. “EBM BLS: Varenicline Improves Electronic Cigarette Quit Success Rate.” *J Gen Intern Med*. 2025 May;40(6):1483-1484. doi: 10.1007/s11606-025-09370-4. Epub 2025 Feb 27. PMID: 40016378; PMCID: PMC12045886. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40016378/>

Hoyt AT, Wilkinson AV, Langlois PH, Galeener CA, Ranjit N, **Dabelea DM**, **Moore BF**. “Prenatal Exposure to Tobacco and Childhood Cognition and Behavior: Effect Modification by Maternal Folate Intake and Breastfeeding Duration.” *Child Psychiatry Hum Dev*. 2025 Feb;56(1):12-22. doi: 10.1007/s10578-023-01524-x. Epub 2023 Apr 8. PMID: 37029873; PMCID: PMC11828757. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37029873/>

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Other Publications Worth Noticing

Evins AE, Cather C, Reeder HT, et al. **Varenicline for Youth Nicotine Vaping Cessation: A Randomized Clinical Trial.** JAMA. 2025;333(21):1876–1886. doi:10.1001/jama.2025.3810.

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2833137>

Han D, Harlow AF, Miech RA, et al. **Nicotine Pouch and E-Cigarette Use and Co-Use Among US Youths in 2023 and 2024.** JAMA Netw Open. 2025;8(4):e256739. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2025.6739.

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2833331>

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Nominations for the 2025 AMA Foundation Excellence in Medicine Awards

Applications open on November 4, 2024, and close on February 21, 2025. The following two awards category give special consideration to those physicians working in the areas of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs

- AMA Foundation Award for Health Education.
- AMA Foundation Award for Leadership in Medical Ethics and Professionalism

<https://amafoundation.org/programs/awards/>

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- Already have an account? Sign in at <https://pivot.proquest.com/session/login>



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- [Funding Focus Newsletter | CU Anschutz](#)
- [Research Grant Process | American Cancer Society](#)
- [Tobacco Regulatory Science Program | NIH](#)
- [Smoking and Tobacco Use | CDC](#)
- [Tobacco education, prevention, and cessation grant program | CDPHE](#)

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