

COMPASS



by julie estlick

No Fort Collins teenager would waltz into English class with a pack of Marlboro Reds rolled up in their shirt sleeve, but the honor roll student sitting near the front row might not think twice about taking a rip from their e-cigarette when the teacher's head is turned.

Vaping is the latest trend in electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS). It simulates smoking a cigarette by breathing in an aerosol, or vapor, and some of the devices are disguised to look like USB flash drives or pens that adults may easily mistake for school supplies. Alarming, vaping has led to a drastic spike in teen tobacco usage in northern Colorado. Over 30 percent of Larimer County high schoolers reported vaping in the prior 30 days—well over twice the national average—and 44 percent had tried vaping at least once, according to the most recent Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (2017).

While the rate of cigarette smoking among area youth has stayed in the single digits for years (currently at 7 percent), local public health educators worry that vaping and a lack of understanding of the potential risks may be creating a whole new generation of young adults addicted to nicotine who will suffer from the same chronic health issues if the trend isn't reversed soon.

"This generation knows that cigarettes are bad for you, they have grown-up in smoke-free environments, and the health effects are indisputable, but only 55 percent of Larimer County teens believe that vaping is risky," says Christa Timmerman, health educator for Larimer County Department of Health and Environment.

Vaping is so new that long-term health consequences are not yet known,

but research suggests that there may be real health risks to young people who vape. Studies in laboratory animals have shown that nicotine has a negative effect on adolescent brain development, impacting memory and attention, and susceptibility to addiction.





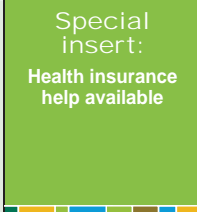
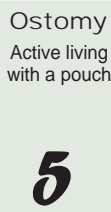
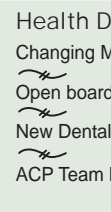
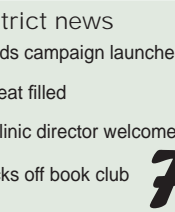
E-cigarettes work by heating a liquid (or a wax or dry herbs) to generate an aerosol, often called a "vapor" or "steam," which the user inhales. The liquid in the e-cigarette is called e-liquid or

e-juice and often contains nicotine, flavorings, and other chemicals. What users are actually inhaling is not just water, but also ultrafine particles discovered in many products tested, including particles that have been shown to contain heavy metals and chemicals known to cause cancer and other diseases. These particles are breathed into the lungs, where some could settle, and then released out into the environment, making them potentially harmful to the user and others nearby.

And those fruity and candy-flavored concentrates teens love to try out? Chemicals, including diacetyl, that have been linked to severe respiratory disease were found in 75 percent of popular flavors tested by Harvard University researchers. Diacetyl is associated with bronchiolitis obliterans, known as "popcorn lung," which affected workers who inhaled artificial butter flavor in microwave popcorn processing facilities.

There are more immediate health risks too—another Harvard study found that teens who vape have a higher heart rate, higher blood pressure, and more insulin resistance, which can lead to type 2 Diabetes disease, than their peers who are don't use tobacco.

▶ continued on page 6

INSIDE	Eat right Nutrition tips from the pros	Survey: Mental health help needed		Special insert: Health insurance help available	Ostomy Active living with a pouch	Health District news Changing Minds campaign launched Open board seat filled New Dental Clinic director welcomed ACP Team kicks off book club	
							
	2	3	4	5	6	7	

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meetings Board meetings are usually held monthly on the fourth Tuesday at 4:00 p.m. at the Health District office. The public is welcome; call 224-5209 to confirm meeting dates and times.

programs and services Cholesterol and Blood Pressure Testing
 Connections *Mental health and substance use answers, options, and support*
 Family Dental Clinic
 HealthInfoSource.com
 Community Impact Team *Organizing community efforts to make systemic changes that will improve the health of the community*
 Integrated Primary Care/ Mental Health Program *A partnership with Salud Family Health Centers and Family Medicine Center*
 Larimer Advance Care Planning Team *Engaging and supporting individuals in completing advance care plans*
 Larimer Health Connect *Connect for Health Colorado and CHP+Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid Program), Prescription Assistance*
 Quit Tobacco Program



Healthy eating *Tips & Tricks* from local nutrition center

Staff members at the Kendall Reagan Nutrition Center at Colorado State University get asked all sorts of questions about healthy eating and how to be a savvy food consumer. Registered Dietitian Nutritionists Kalyn Garcia and Shelby Cox share the answers to their top inquiries below.

What is the best diet to follow to lose weight?

Nutrition is unique to the individual. There are no one-size-fits-all diet plans that will guarantee weight loss for all people. We don't use strict diets to promote weight loss since they tend to be "all or nothing" and can actually sabotage weight-loss efforts. Rather than recommend restrictive diets, we instead work with clients to set realistic action plans that lead to lifestyle changes which promote sustainable weight loss.

Our clients who successfully lose weight and keep it off do the following:

- Track food intake and activity
- Get regular physical activity
- Eat smaller portions
- Take time to plan meals and grocery shop
- Avoid unnecessary restrictions
- Eat breakfast daily
- Have a healthy relationship with food
- Focus on fruits and vegetables
- Eat mindfully
- Eat at home more often than eating out

When is the best time to eat?

Resist the temptation to follow diet rules that promise eating/not eating at certain times, because that approach negates your body's biological intuition. Trust your body's internal hunger and satiety cues, or you're more likely to eat impulsively.

What foods should I avoid?

There is not one food that has all the nutrients your body needs. All foods fit and can serve a purpose to promote wellness. It's important to eat enough food—and variety—to support health and energy. Generally, emphasize whole foods and limit processed foods. There are many health conditions that do warrant specific nutrition therapies and restrictions.

If you're unsure about your unique nutrition needs, work with a registered dietitian nutritionist to navigate evidence-based nutrition guidelines so you don't fall short of essential nutrients. Community members can ask questions, get information on classes, or book a nutrition counseling session with the Kendall Reagan Nutrition Center by calling 970-495-5916 or going to nutritioncenter.chhs.colostate.edu.

Content courtesy of the Kendall Reagan Nutrition Center at CSU. The Kendall Reagan Nutrition Center provides service learning opportunities and training for students in the department of Food Science and Human Nutrition and enhances the health of the community through nutrition outreach, collaboration, and research.



MENTAL HEALTH IN OUR COMMUNITY

by richard cox

Mental health is key to overall well-being and a satisfying quality of life. According to data from the 2016 Community Health Survey, lack of access to affordable mental health care continues to be a barrier for many Larimer County residents.

How many people struggle with mental health?



One in five Larimer County residents who completed the 2016 Community Health Survey reported they currently had “depression, anxiety, or other mental health problems.” However, the average number of days that survey respondents said their mental health was “not good” during the preceding month has steadily decreased over the past 15 years. Residents reported having 3.1 poor mental health days in 2016, down from 4.6 days in 2001.

People are putting off mental health care due to cost



Of those reporting a mental health problem, 54% have put off mental health care in the past two years due to the cost.

Among those who delayed getting mental health care due to cost, 22% had considered suicide in the past year.

Who has considered suicide?

Overall, 7% of survey respondents had considered suicide in the past year, an increase from 5% in 2013.

- ▶ Men were slightly more likely than women to have considered suicide (9% vs. 6%).
- ▶ Heavy drinkers were more than twice as likely to have considered suicide.
- ▶ Those who used marijuana within the past year were more than three times as likely.
- ▶ People reporting pain most days or every day were four times as likely.
- ▶ Those reporting depression were 12 times as likely to have considered suicide.



Learn more about suicide prevention

Connections offers free QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) suicide prevention training monthly at the Health District. Free Mental Health First Aid training is also available. For more information, call 970-530-2883 or visit mentalhealthconnections.org.

If you need mental health and substance use ANSWERS, OPTIONS, & SUPPORT:

Connections (for adults)
970-221-5551

CAYAC (for children, adolescents, and young adults)
970-221-3308

IF YOU ARE IN CRISIS:

**SummitStone Health Partners
Community Crisis Clinic**
970-494-4200
Suicide Prevention Lifeline
844-493-8255

More health data available

Want information on other local health topics? In addition to mental health, fact sheets from the 2016 Community Health Survey also are available for access to care, advance care planning, alcohol use, chronic pain, driving habits, healthy eating and active living, marijuana use, tobacco use, and oral health. Visit healthdistrict.org/2016-community-health-assessment.





MEALS on WHEELS
FORT COLLINS

*Serving up sustenance,
social interaction, security*

by kathy hayes



Meals on Wheels for Fort Collins volunteer Stephanie Mekelburg delivers lunch to Joann Potts.

Photo courtesy of Meals on Wheels for Fort Collins

It's noontime on Friday and Dell Howard is delivering hot meals to several seniors in southwest Fort Collins. At each house, she brings a meal to the door and receives a warm smile and a "thank you" in return.

Nearly one in six seniors is at risk of not being properly nourished. Meals on Wheels for Fort Collins helps lower this risk by delivering healthy lunches to people over age 62, those with a disability, and people who are homebound or unable to safely prepare their own meals.

"We serve an average of 210 meals a day in our delivery area of Fort Collins and Wellington," says Executive Director Glenda Shayne.

An individual, family member, or social worker may contact Meals on Wheels to apply. Qualified applicants choose from menus and have the option to receive one to five meals a week, Monday through Friday. Some clients will order a large meal or two meals on Friday, to help them through the weekend.

Menus are heart healthy and diabetic friendly. Choices include vegetarian and dental-soft options and meals for people with kidney or liver function issues. Nutrition facts are provided on all menus.

Poudre Valley Hospital prepares the meals, donating \$154,000 a year in food and charging Meals on Wheels just \$3.85 per meal. Clients pay according to a sliding scale, and never more than \$5 for a regular meal. No one is denied due to inability to pay.


Volunteer drivers deliver meals and provide welcomed social interaction to individuals often living alone. "For some clients, I'm the only

person they'll see all day," notes Howard. During her six years of delivering meals, she's developed some warm friendships, often allowing time at the end of her route to visit with a client.

Drivers carry cell phones in case they need to call for help. Once, when a client didn't answer the door, Howard saw through the window that the woman was lying unconscious on the floor. She immediately called 911.

Other times, drivers will call the office if they suspect something is amiss. Office staff will then call the client to see if they're okay and let them know their meal is there. "If they don't answer, we'll call their emergency contact to make sure someone's touching base with them," says Shayne. "We receive calls from adult children who really appreciate that someone's looking in on their parent."

Drivers make 6 to 11 stops along 25 routes each day. "We really need more volunteers," says Shayne. "We have many working volunteers who do this on their lunch hour, and students and older people, too."

Howard steps out of her car to deliver her last meal of the day. "This is just an hour or so out of my week, and it means everything to me," she says. They're just so grateful." 

Other food resources for seniors:

Volunteers of America Northern Colorado

- Frozen meal delivery to homebound seniors in Larimer County
- Nutritious noon meals and social interaction provided at their Smiling Spoon Cafés throughout Larimer County (a donation of \$2.50 per meal is suggested)

voacolorado.org/gethelp-northernco
larimer@voacolorado.org
970-472-9630

Food Bank for Larimer County

- Mobile and brick-and-mortar pantries serve 3,800 seniors annually
- Food boxes for eligible low-income seniors through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Supplemental Food Program

foodbanklarimer.org
970-493-4477

The mission of Meals on Wheels for Fort Collins is to provide nutritious, hot noon meals and social interaction to seniors and eligible clients in their homes five days a week in the greater Fort Collins area. The Fort Collins chapter celebrates its 50th anniversary next year.

MEALS ON WHEELS FOR FORT COLLINS

Volunteers needed!
Sign up at fcmow.org

info@fcmow.org
970-484-6325

Life Happens....



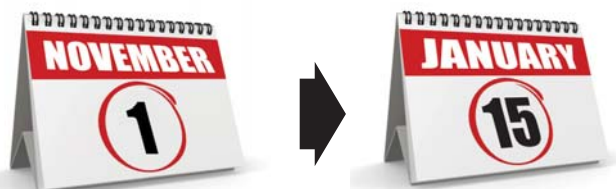
Are YOU covered?

Health insurance—What you need to know...

- Protect your health and your wallet. Think health insurance isn't worth the monthly bill? If you get sick or injured, you could be out thousands of dollars and put your family in serious medical debt. Sign up for health insurance today to help avoid big medical bills and protect your finances.
- Don't leave money on the table—financial assistance is still available. If you are eligible, you can receive help that reduces the costs of your premium, copays, and coinsurance. Many people are surprised to find out that they qualify, making health insurance more affordable than ever. **Yes, maybe even you—check!**
- Plans change every year! Each year, it's important to take a look at how your situation may have changed and make sure your plan still fits your needs. Have there been changes to your income, doctors, hospitals, prescriptions, plan choices, and prices? Don't just let your plan auto-renew—many people have been sorry that they did!
- Preventive Care is free. All plans purchased through the Marketplace cover recommended preventive care for free, with no copay. This means free cancer screenings, check-ups, and more.
- Make sure you understand your options. Short-term health insurance plans may seem like an affordable option, but may cost you more in the end. Short-term plans are not Qualified Health Plans and may not cover all of your needs or cover people with pre-existing conditions. When they end, you are not eligible for a Marketplace plan until the next open enrollment period.

Open Enrollment

Colorado residents
have until



NOW is the time to schedule your appointment with a Health Coverage Specialist to learn about your options, apply for financial assistance, and enroll in the plan of your choice for 2019!

**Make an appointment for
FREE in-person assistance:**

970-472-0444

larimerhealthconnect.org

Health District

LARIMER HEALTH CONNECT

Your Local Resource.



Already have health insurance through the Connect for Health Colorado Marketplace?

Letting your plan auto-renew or selecting the “suggested plan” from Connect for Health Colorado may not be your best choice. NOW is the time to check—if you do not act, your plan may renew automatically and you may be stuck in a plan that does not meet your needs. Your situation may have changed or you may find a plan that costs less and works better for you. Check to see if:

- The premium, copays, or coinsurance has changed
- Your prescriptions are still included in the drug formulary
- Your health-care providers are still in-network
- It's still the best plan for you if your situation has changed

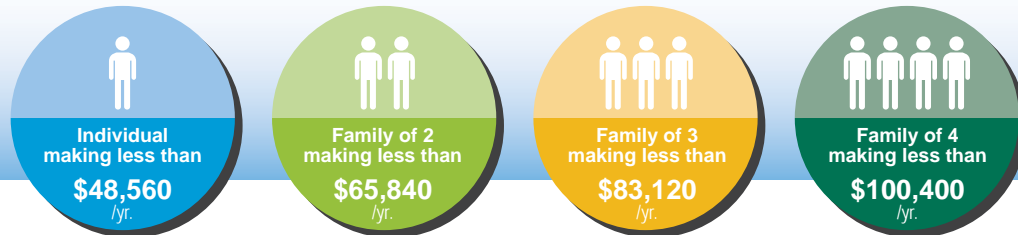
Check carefully – Some people who did not check last year were surprised when their plan had higher rates or their provider was no longer covered.

Don't delay – You have only a short time to decide. If you want help from Larimer Health Connect, call NOW to be sure we can reserve an appointment between Nov. 1 and Dec. 15 in order to stay covered in a plan that meets your needs and starts Jan. 1, 2019. Open Enrollment ends Jan. 15.

Don't have health insurance?

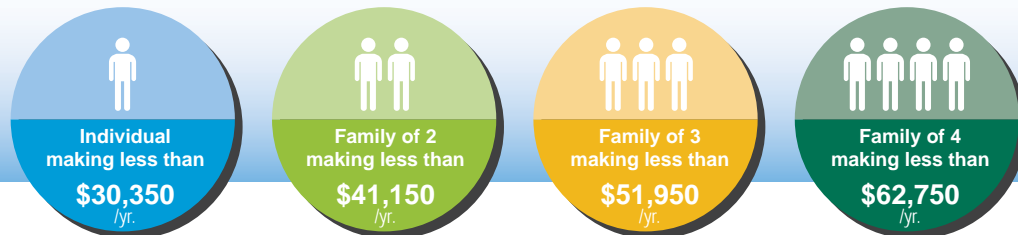
YOU MIGHT QUALIFY FOR FINANCIAL HELP with a plan from the Connect for Health Colorado Marketplace. These plans can have big discounts, and shopping around can help you find a plan that meets your needs and budget. Below are some examples of how individuals and families can reduce their costs, if eligible, when purchasing health insurance:

Premium tax credits – If your annual income falls within the ranges below, you may qualify for financial assistance in the form of premium tax credits that you can take in advance to reduce your monthly premium or take the full amount when you file your taxes for 2019.

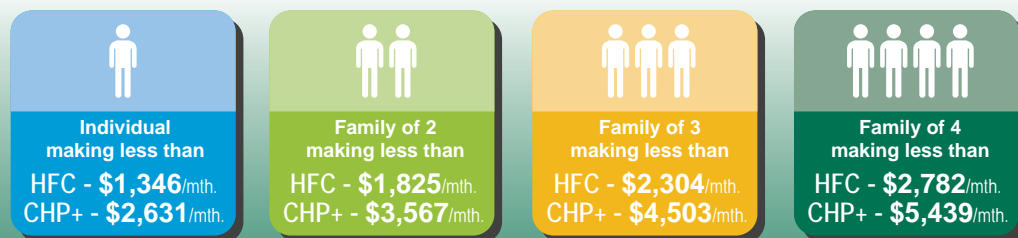


Cost-sharing reductions – A discount that lowers the amount you pay when you receive care. In addition to premium tax credits, cost-sharing reductions are available to those with low-to-moderate income who qualify and who enroll in a **silver plan** through Connect for Health Colorado. Health insurance plans typically require some form of cost-sharing (also called out-of-pocket costs) when you receive covered health-care services. Cost-sharing reductions help you save on these expenses, which are in addition to your monthly premium and come in a variety of forms, including:

- **Copayments:** Set dollar amounts for covered services
- **Coinsurance:** A percentage of the allowed cost for covered services
- **Deductibles:** Set dollar amounts that enrollees must pay before their plan starts to cover the service or a group of services



YOU MIGHT BE ELIGIBLE FOR FREE OR LOW COST HEALTH COVERAGE THROUGH HEALTH FIRST COLORADO (HFC - Colorado's Medicaid Program) OR CHILD HEALTH PLAN PLUS (CHP+)* – If eligible, you can enroll in these plans **year-round**.



*CHP+ is for eligible children and pregnant women only.

Connect for Health Colorado

Health First CO/CHP+

Health District

LARIMER HEALTH CONNECT

Your **FREE**, local resource for in-person assistance

Larimer Health Connect is a free service that helps people find the best options for health insurance to meet their family's health needs and budget. It is a program of the Health District of Northern Larimer County. Our trained staff provides free, impartial, in-person assistance with new free and lower-cost health insurance plans, including plans from the Connect for Health Colorado Marketplace, Health First Colorado, and CHP+. The Marketplace is a state-run exchange and is not affiliated with the Health District.



WE CAN HELP YOU:

- Understand how health insurance works
- Sort through your options so you can make an informed choice that's best for your situation
- Find out if you are eligible for financial assistance
- Assist with enrollment
- Help you understand your new coverage

If you're not sure what's right for you or have questions, contact us! We can help you sort it out. Schedule your **FREE** appointment with Larimer Health Connect. We'll work with you until you are covered.

Note: Though we can help you understand important things to consider, we cannot offer advice on which plan to choose. If you need help making a final decision, see the Connect for Health Colorado website for a list of certified brokers.

Health insurance can be confusing... that's why we are here to help!

Who we help

- Those who do not have health insurance
- Those renewing plans through Connect for Health Colorado
- Those who buy their own health insurance (not covered by their employer)
- Those who get health insurance through their employer but it costs more than 9.86% of their household income

Resources for assistance



In-Person Help

Larimer Health Connect

If you need in-person help to understand your health coverage options and find plans that best fit your needs and budget, the Larimer Health Connect team is your free, unbiased, local resource.

Call **970-472-0444** or visit larimerhealthconnect.org to make an appointment.



Brokers and Other Assistors

Brokers/Assistors

Find other certified brokers or assistors who are trained to help you apply and enroll in a Marketplace plan.

Visit connectforhealthco.com/person-help/ to find someone near you.



Over the Phone

Connect for Health Colorado by Phone

Call the Customer Service Center at the Connect for Health Colorado Marketplace at **855-PLANS-4-YOU (855-752-6749)**.

A customer service representative can help you apply and enroll over the phone.



Online

Connect for Health Colorado Online

Visit connectforhealthco.com to apply and enroll on the web. Live Chat is available to help you with questions along the way.

To see if you qualify for Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid Program) or CHP+, visit colorado.gov/peak.



IF YOU HAVE MEDICARE

If you have questions or need help with Medicare, please call 970-495-8560 to talk to a trained Medicare counselor with the Aspen Club at UCHealth. Larimer Health Connect does not provide assistance with Medicare applications.

Health District
LARIMER HEALTH CONNECT

For an appointment for free, in-person assistance:

970-472-0444
larimerhealthconnect.org
Se habla español

Open Enrollment starts November 1st – Don't miss out!



Start shopping for your 2019 health insurance plan!



Deadline to renew or purchase a plan for coverage that starts January 1, 2019.



Last day to buy a 2019 plan, unless you have a qualifying life-change event.

What to bring to your appointment

- Home and/or mailing addresses for everyone applying for coverage
- Social Security numbers/cards of each member of the household (if a legal immigrant, please bring your documentation, such as a green card or other official documentation)
- Birth certificate(s) (an original or certified copy—not the souvenir copy provided by a hospital at birth)
- Photo ID (a passport may be used in place of the birth certificate and photo ID)
- Employer and income information for each member of the household (for example, wage and tax statements such as pay stubs or W-2 forms)
- If self-employed, a ledger indicating your revenue and expenses (Schedule C from last year's tax filing may be helpful for estimating 2019 income)
- Information about any other income earned by household members (if you have income from rental property, please bring in a copy of the lease agreement)
- Your best estimate of what your household income will be in 2019
- Information on how you file your taxes
- Information and policy numbers for health insurance plans currently covering members of the household
- Information about any job-related health insurance that anyone in the household may be able to get, even if they are not enrolled in it
- If anyone in the home is disabled, information about assets and expenses for the household (this may allow you access to additional programs)
- Names of preferred health-care providers and prescription drugs you take
- Documents verifying your authorized representative (if you choose to have one)
- A valid email address to create an account (if you do not already have an email address for your account, you can sign up for a free Gmail or Yahoo email account)

If you already have health insurance through the Marketplace or Medicaid

- You will need your username and password for PEAK and/or Connect for Health Colorado for your appointment. If you do not remember, call the Connect for Health Colorado Customer Support Center to get the information and/or reset your password BEFORE you come in for your appointment.
- If you had health insurance tax credits last year, make sure you have reconciled/filed taxes for 2017 to be eligible for financial assistance for 2019.
- Have you received any notices from the Marketplace or the State of Colorado regarding your health coverage? Make sure to read them and contact us before your appointment if you need help understanding the notices.
- If you recently received a Medicaid denial, please locate your 1B case number and bring it with you to your appointment. The number can be located in the letter from the Department of Human Services, or you may contact us at least 2 days before your appointment to help you track it down.

Larimer Health Connect locations

Loveland

Community Life Center
1511 E. 11th St.
Loveland

By appointment only. Call 970-472-0444 or check larimerhealthconnect.org for available appointment times.

FTC Old Town

144 N. Mason St., Unit 7
Fort Collins

Regular Hours
M-F 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

Open Enrollment Hours
(Nov. 1, 2018–Jan. 15, 2019):
M, W, F 8 a.m.–5 p.m.
T, Th 8 a.m.–8 p.m.

Occasional Saturday hours will be available. Call 970-472-0444 or check larimerhealthconnect.org for dates and times.

Appointments strongly encouraged. Walk-ins may be accommodated depending on staff availability.

FTC North

Health District
120 Bristlecone Dr.
Fort Collins

M-F 8 a.m.–5 p.m.
By appointment only.

Additional locations and times may be added throughout Larimer County. Please call 970-472-0444 or check larimerhealthconnect.org for more information or to schedule an appointment at any of our locations.

Health District

LARIMER HEALTH CONNECT

**Your LOCAL resource.
All appointments are FREE.**

For an appointment for in-person assistance:

970-472-0444

larimerhealthconnect.org

Se habla español



A New Lease on Life:

Celebrating World Ostomy Day 2018

by rhea maze

Lois Fink struggled with Crohn's disease for 19 years before her doctor suggested ostomy surgery. Her response? "Absolutely not."

"I didn't really understand it but thought of it as being mutilated and believed that this was the surgery to avoid at all costs," says Fink, now a patient advocate, inspirational speaker, and author.

Ostomy surgery is a lifesaving procedure that re-routes the way stool or urine exits the body due to problems with the urinary or digestive system caused by illness, injury, or other medical conditions.

"People refer to ostomy surgery as 'the bag' which has a tremendously negative reception in our society," Fink says. She put her surgery off for two additional years and ruminated over some of the most commonly held fears while her condition worsened. "People think that they're going to have to stop being active and stay home, that they're going to smell, that intimacy won't be possible, and that they'll have to wear baggy clothes. I'm happy to say that none of this is true. Ostomy surgery gave me incredible freedom and allowed me to no longer be defined by Crohn's disease. I now wear an ostomy pouching system and am able to live a full life."

It's estimated that 725,000 to one million people of all ages are living with an ostomy nationwide. Every three years in October, communities come together to celebrate World Ostomy Day, an international event sponsored in the United States by the United Ostomy Associations of America (UOAA). This year, Oct. 6 marked World Ostomy Day.

"You've likely met a person living with an ostomy but never knew it, as modern ostomy pouches lay discreetly on the body and are odor-proof," says UOAA President Susan Burns. "People with ostomies swim, rock climb, and work every job under the sun. With proper support, care, and education people with an ostomy are capable of anything."

Ostomy patients in Northern Colorado are fortunate to have access to comprehensive education, counseling, and follow-up support through the UCHealth system.

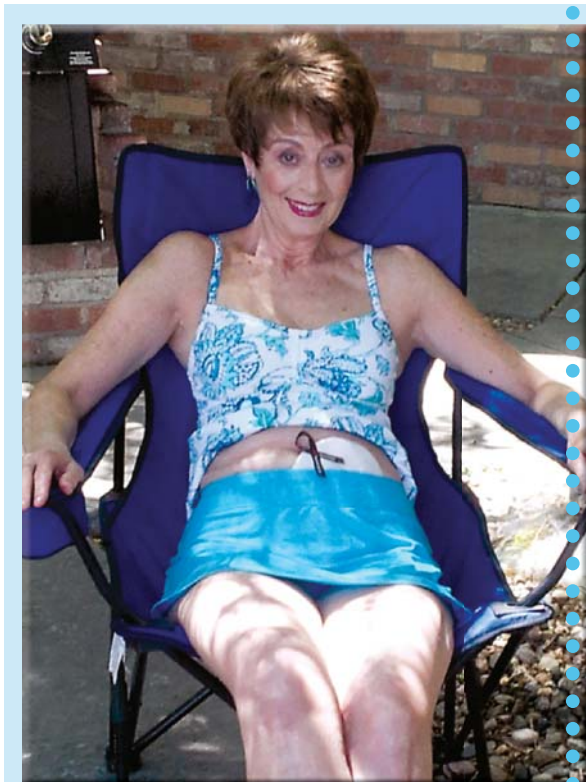
"Patients often feel scared to go home after ostomy surgery, so we try to make that

transition as smooth as possible," says Shannon Brown, a certified wound, ostomy, continence (WOC) nurse at UCHealth Poudre Valley Hospital.

Brown and her colleagues provide patients with education and counseling before their scheduled surgery, and help select an ideal surgical site. "We consider everything from clothing choices to the patient's anatomy in order to find the best possible spot that will allow them to continue to live a normal life," Brown says.

When pre-operative support is not possible due to emergency surgery or other circumstances, the WOC nurses will meet with patients as soon as they can in order to start preparing them to be as independent as possible before going home. They provide resources, information on supplies and support groups, education for family members and caregivers, and an outpatient clinic every Wednesday that gives patients continuing support after they leave the hospital.

"There's a stigma that having an ostomy limits your lifestyle, so we work hard to educate patients that it's not going to limit them," Brown says. "Once they heal from surgery, they can go back to being just as active as before. We have patients who scuba dive and run marathons—having an ostomy doesn't mean you have to stay home."



Lois Fink participates in the #GetYourBellyOut movement by sharing a picture of her ostomy pouching system.

Photo courtesy of Lois Fink

Learn more...

Resources, including over 300 support groups nationwide, information, and opportunities for getting involved with future World Ostomy Day activities can be found at ostomy.org or by calling 1-800-826-0826

Reach UCHealth Poudre Valley Hospital's WOC nurses at 970-495-8264

Connect with the Boulder County ostomy support group at bocoostomygroup.com



What particularly troubles public health experts about vaping products is that one pod, or cartridge filled with liquid, can pack a nicotine punch equal to 20 regular cigarettes, with the potential for addicting a young user fast. Young people who use e-cigarettes may also be more likely to smoke cigarettes in the future. In fact, a recent National Academy of Medicine report found some evidence that e-cigarette use increases the frequency and amount of cigarette smoking in the future.

“It can be hard to keep up with all of the information because the vaping industry is evolving so rapidly. New discreet products are getting into the hands of our youth and many adults may not even know it’s a nicotine vaping product.”

Christa Timmerman
Health educator for Larimer County Department of Health and Environment

E-cigarette makers have attracted a lot of attention from the FDA, which is taking steps this fall to crack down on companies selling to minors. The FDA is requiring some of the top makers, including JUUL, 7 Daze for Zoor kits, Liquid Filling Solutions for Mylé products, and SVR Inc. for SMPO kits, to submit evidence that they are keeping the electronic devices out of the hands of those under 18 or be removed from the market. And as of September, ENDS devices and liquid packaging must carry a health warning label stating “This product contains nicotine derived from tobacco. Nicotine is an addictive chemical.”

It IS a big deal

Vaping is changing attitudes and perceptions toward tobacco, even among elementary and middle schoolers, according to Meghan Willis, UCHealth’s Healthy Hearts school-based program coordinator. The program sends nurses and health educators into local schools at 5th, 7th, and 9th grade to teach students about heart health and how to connect what they are learning about their bodies and with how their actions impact the body’s systems. Students fill out surveys before and after the program and can get a cholesterol and blood pressure screening with parent approval.

Last year was the first time the survey of 7th graders showed a significant drop in the number of kids who pledged to “live a tobacco-free life,” from 89.9 percent in the 2016-17 school year to 83 percent last year.

“The data matches what our screeners are hearing,” says NaNet Jenkins, Healthy Hearts program manager. “When we talk with students in the classroom and then one-on-one at the screenings, they often hesitate to make the tobacco-free pledge saying, ‘well, I would still vape.’ They say ‘it’s not a big deal.’”

The average age that Larimer County teens begin vaping is 14 years old. The state legal age to buy tobacco products is 18, but many underage users say it’s easy to buy vaping starter kits and refills at gas stations, convenience stores, and grocery stores. Several states and four mountain towns in Colorado have approved raising the age to 21 to purchase tobacco products, to distance social sources (like 18-year-olds buying for younger friends) and put nicotine on the same level as marijuana and alcohol as products that should not be available to adolescents whose brains are still developing well into their 20s.

Reversing the trend

Education is the key to prevention, say public health leaders. Healthy Hearts educators focus on getting students the facts about the risks of e-cigarettes and help them think about the long-term repercussions to their health.

Willis explains: “We role-play how to say ‘no’ if offered an e-cigarette in a way that feels authentic to them, and we encourage students to think for themselves. Consider where you’re getting your information, look at the medical literature, and then make a decision that’s right for you, not your best friend.”

Larimer County Department of Health and Environment staff are also

working on outreach to health care providers and area school staff, and coordinating with the state health department on vaping education campaigns for youth and adults in the region.

“What we’ve seen is that some teachers and parents don’t know much about the whole vaping trend, but they want to know more,” Timmerman says. “It can be hard to keep up with all of the information because the vaping industry is evolving so rapidly.

New discreet products are getting into the hands of our youth, and many adults may not even know it’s a nicotine vaping product.”

Journey to quit

Some in the tobacco treatment field argue that vaping is a good alternative to smoking for adults because it is safer than combustible nicotine products and users can adjust the dosage of nicotine in certain devices and wean themselves off. However, Rosi Davidson, tobacco treatment specialist for the Health District’s Quit Tobacco program for adults, counsels her clients to use research-based alternatives to quit for good. “To me, vaping is an addictive behavior, another product to inhale and alter mood, and possibly damage a person’s lungs. I can’t say whether e-cigarettes are safe or not—we don’t have any long-term studies, period. What I do know is that counseling and FDA-approved nicotine-replacement therapies can help people quit tobacco.”

If you are age 18 or older and want help to stop smoking, call 970-224-5209 to make a free first appointment with the Health District’s Quit Tobacco program. More information is available at healthdistrict.org/quitsmoking.

Resources for teens ready to kick nicotine:

- Enoughwiththepuff.com
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- Teen.smokefree.gov
Information on phone apps, texting support, and other resources for teens
- [Instagram.com/smokefreeus](https://www.instagram.com/smokefreeus)
The National Cancer Institute provides information, encouragement, and support
- [Colorado QuitLine](http://ColoradoQuitLine.org)
1-800-Quit-Now or 1-800-784-8669, coquitline.org



Changing Minds campaign spotlights substance use disorders and addiction

The Health District of Northern Larimer County, in conjunction with the Mental Health and Substance Use Alliance, has launched a campaign to increase public awareness of substance use disorders and addiction in our community. The goals of the Changing Minds campaign are to shed light on the public health crisis of addiction in Larimer County, de-stigmatize the disease of addiction, and give hope to the 26,000 in our community living with a substance use disorder.

One in 10 Larimer County residents suffers from addiction. Fewer than 1 in 10 of those 26,000 community members will get the treatment they need. That leaves 23,660 in need of addiction care—enough to fill the Budweiser Events Center three times over.

The campaign emphasizes that addiction is a disease that changes the brain. When addiction takes hold, the brain is rewired to function as if drugs and/or alcohol are life-or-death and essential for survival. It stops being a choice; it becomes a chronic, life-threatening disease like cancer or diabetes.

But there is hope. Addiction care can be as effective as treatments for other diseases and works the same way—with medication, counseling, and ongoing support. Evidence-based medication has been proven to stabilize dopamine levels in the

brain and reduce cravings. Individualized, continuing care is vastly improving recovery rates and reducing remission. Treatment can work. The brain can heal.

The Changing Minds campaign is about starting conversations. In order to spark community dialogue about addiction, the Health District has created Changing Minds “Brain Pods,” eight freestanding, glowing displays that dispense facts about addiction. The Brain Pod installations, which debuted at NewWestFest, will rotate to different locations throughout northern Colorado this fall.

A website for Changing Minds solicits and shares stories of addiction and recovery from our community. It also features information and short, simple animations on how addiction changes the brain, and illustrates the cost of addiction in Larimer County.

When we change the narrative on addiction, we dispel stigma, break down barriers to care, and increase awareness of how to best allocate our community’s resources. To learn more about addiction and how we can start changing minds and saving lives, visit ChangingMindsLarimer.org.



Celeste Kling fills board vacancy

Celeste Kling was appointed to a vacant seat on the Health District board of directors in July following the resignation of another board member. Kling, 60, is a Fort Collins attorney who previously served two terms on the Health District board, from 2006 to 2014. She was selected by current board members from a pool of six applicants. Kling will serve the remainder of the term, which ends in 2020, after which the seat will be open.



New book club series explores the end-of-life journey

The Larimer Advance Care Planning Team (ACP) kicked off its Book Club for Mortals series at the Old Town Library in Fort Collins in October. Community members are invited to attend a monthly discussion on books with different perspectives on dying. The adults-only group meets the second Wednesday of the month from 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., through February 13, 2019.

“This is a great opportunity to present end-of-life care issues in a different way,” says Mindy Rickard, planning coordinator for ACP. “The book group is attendee led, and we really hope that people read the book for that month, have thought about it, and bring their questions.”

Sylvia Garcia, outreach librarian at the Poudre River Library District, worked with Rickard to choose titles that will spark lively conversations around mortality and how people wish to spend their final days. “It’s a challenging subject, but we find lots of moments of laughter, too, and it can be life changing to look at things differently.”

Limited complimentary copies of each selection are available at the Old Town Library, 201 Peterson St. See poudrelibraries.org/bookclubs for details or call 970-221-6740. The ACP Team will also have information available about getting your end-of-life care wishes documented and made available to area health-care systems. For more information on the program, go to larimeradvancare.org.

New dental services director hired

Dana Turner joined the Health District in August as the new Dental Services Director. She will oversee the Health District’s 12-chair Family Dental Clinic, as well as services that match qualifying patients needing specialized care with volunteer community dentists.



Turner previously was the manager of dental services for Denver Health and oversaw five clinics before being recruited into human relations as an employee relations specialist. She has an undergraduate degree in social work and a master’s degree in health care administration/management, both from Colorado State University. Welcome, Dana!



classes, screenings, and services

cholesterol tests

Find out your total cholesterol, HDL, LDL, triglycerides, and blood glucose numbers; learn what they mean and what to do about them.

Health District residents who have never received our test are eligible to receive their first test for free. Health District boundaries include Fort Collins, Laporte, Wellington, Red Feather Lakes, Livermore, Bellvue, and Timnath. Cost for all others is \$15. Sliding fees available.

Cholesterol tests are 8:15-10:30 a.m. **Appointments required**; call 970-224-5209.

October

- Tues., Oct. 2** – Senior Center, 1200 Raintree
- Thurs., Oct. 4** – Spirit of Joy Church, 4501 S. Lemay
- Thurs., Oct. 11** – Health District, 120 Bristlecone
- Thurs., Oct. 18** – Senior Center, 1200 Raintree

November

- Thurs., Nov. 1** – Spirit of Joy Church, 4501 S. Lemay
- Tues., Nov. 6** – Senior Center, 1200 Raintree
- Thurs., Nov. 15** – Senior Center, 1200 Raintree
- Tues., Nov. 27** – Harmony Library, 4616 S. Shields

December

- Tues., Dec. 4** – Senior Center, 1200 Raintree
- Thurs., Dec. 6** – Spirit of Joy Church, 4501 S. Lemay
- Thurs., Dec. 13** – Health District, 120 Bristlecone
- Thurs., Dec. 20** – Senior Center, 1200 Raintree



An 8-hour fast is recommended for best results; medications and water are permitted. Visit healthdistrict.org/heart for more information.

BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS OFFERED MONTHLY!

Free, 5-10 minute walk-in blood pressure reading and consultation with a registered nurse. The consultation includes discussion and materials on how to keep your blood pressure where it needs to be, how to lower your risk for heart attack and stroke, and follow-up suggestions.

Checks are the second Monday of each month, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at the Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree. No appointment necessary.

Visit healthdistrict.org/heart for more information.



free mental health classes

CAYAC (Child, Adolescent, and Young Adult Connections) Parent Education Speaker Series

Wed., Oct. 10 – “You Deserve a Break” – Self-care: Taking care of yourself when you are taking care of others

5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m., Health District, 120 Bristlecone • FREE dinner. RSVP to Ana: apasini@healthdistrict.org or 970-530-2842.

Tues., Oct. 16 – “Play Therapy 101” – A parent’s guide to play therapy and how it can help

5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m., CAYAC office, 1302 S. Shields, A1-3
FREE dinner. RSVP to Ana: apasini@healthdistrict.org or 970-530-2842.

Wed., Oct. 24 – “Teens and Substance Use” – Education and resources for parents on the topic of substance use and lowering risk factors

5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m., Health District, 120 Bristlecone • FREE dinner
RSVP to Ana: apasini@healthdistrict.org or 970-530-2842.

Mental Health First Aid Training taught by Connections staff

Mon., Oct. 22 (Adult-focused)

Tues., Nov. 27 (Youth-focused)

All trainings run 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. at the Health District, 120 Bristlecone. Contact Emily at eleatham@healthdistrict.org or 970-530-2883 to register.

QPR Suicide Prevention Training taught by Connections staff

Tues., Oct. 16, 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Wed., Nov. 14, 12 p.m. - 1 p.m.

Tues., Dec. 4, 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

All classes are at the Health District, 120 Bristlecone. Snacks provided. Feel free to bring a sack lunch or dinner. Contact Emily at eleatham@healthdistrict.org or 970-530-2883 to register.

thinking of quitting tobacco?

Hundreds of Fort Collins residents have quit by using our Quit Tobacco Program and YOU CAN, TOO!



We can help!

Call today:

970-224-5209

INDIVIDUAL COUPLES/BUDDIES GROUP SESSIONS

- Once enrolled, free nicotine patches / gum / lozenges
- Sliding fees for those who qualify
- Free for Medicaid recipients
- Positive, supportive approach

Your first appointment is FREE—Find out if our program fits your needs.

healthdistrict.org/quitsmoking

Do you have Medicaid?

You may also have dental coverage.



Medicaid • CHP+ • Sliding fee scale

Health District
FAMILY DENTAL CLINIC

Call to see if you qualify!
970-416-5331

healthdistrict.org/dental

Patients must live in the Health District, have no private dental insurance, and meet income guidelines.