



# BE EPIC

## ESCAPE the VAPE

E-Cigarette Prevention  
in Rural Communities

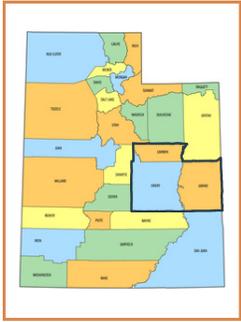


Extension  
UtahStateUniversity



# FOUR YEARS

2020-2024



Be Epic, Escape the Vape was created in 2020 and has been instrumental in spreading awareness of the dangers of youth vaping. Community partners have suggested that Be Epic has contributed to reducing rates of tobacco and vaping initiation among youth in Carbon, Emery, and Grand counties, Utah (Utah Student Health and Risk Prevention [SHARP] Survey, 2023). Be Epic is funded by grants received from the Southeastern Utah Health Department via the E-cigarette, Marijuana, & Other Drugs Prevention Grant (\$100,000 per year from 2020-2026) and utilizes data from the SHARP survey to identify risk and protective factors among local youth in order to target prevention programming where it is needed most.

### SHARP Survey Statewide vs. Four Corners LSAA Lifetime E-Cigarette use 6th, 8th, 10th, 12th Grade

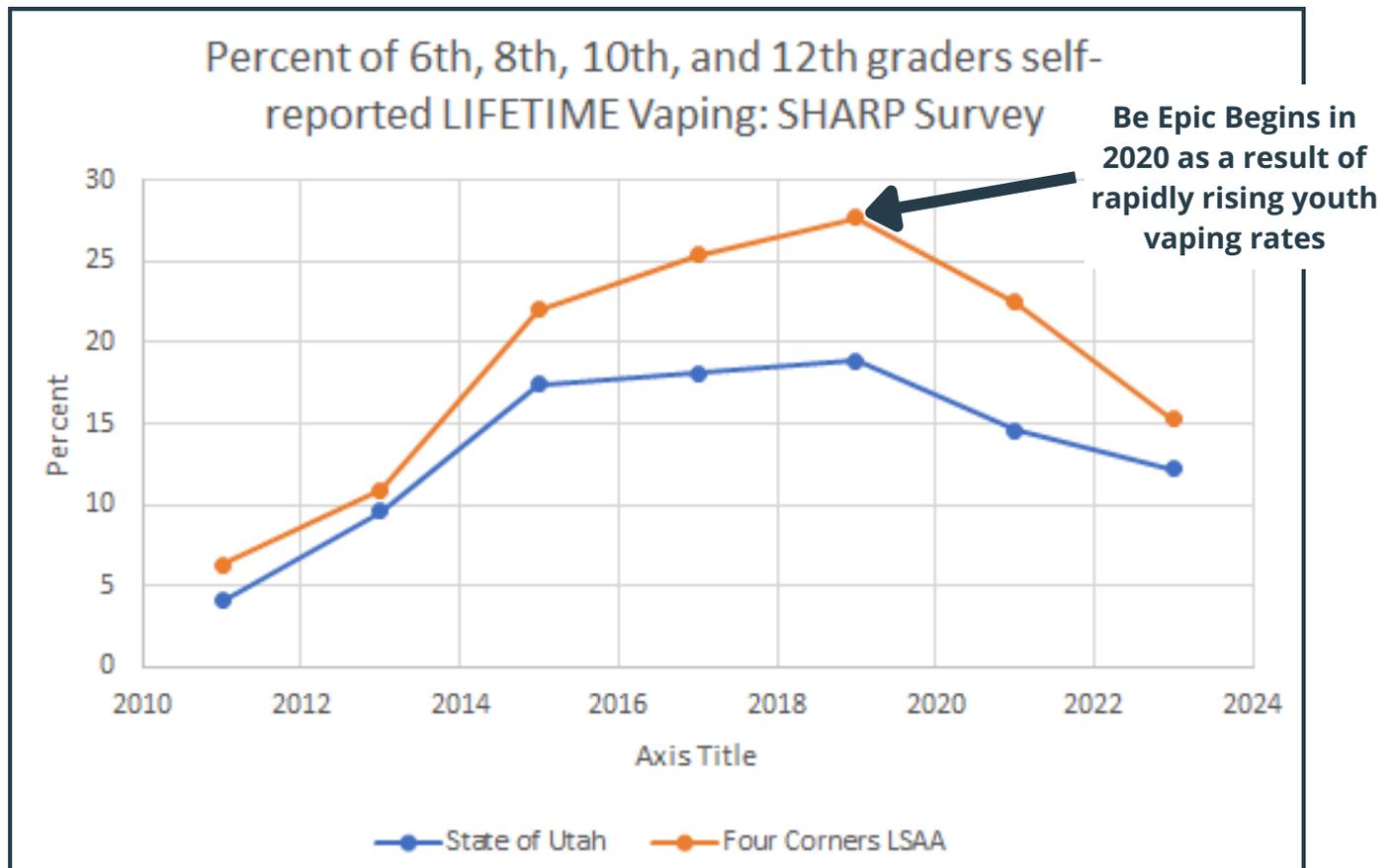


Figure 1. (above) Since 2011 the SHARP Survey has shown that the Four Corners LSAA consistently reports higher rates of youth vaping than the rest of the state, however since 2020 there has been a significant decline in rates of youth e-cigarette experimentation and use. This may be attributed to the multicomponent prevention efforts by Be Epic and other prevention focused programming in Southeast Utah, as well as COVID lockdowns and the alarming news coverage of EVALI. No matter the reason for the decline, Be Epic has become a well known source of trusted youth e-cigarette prevention information in Southeast Utah.

## Be Epic uses SHARP survey data to identify specific risk factors that are a concern in Southeastern Utah communities, such as:

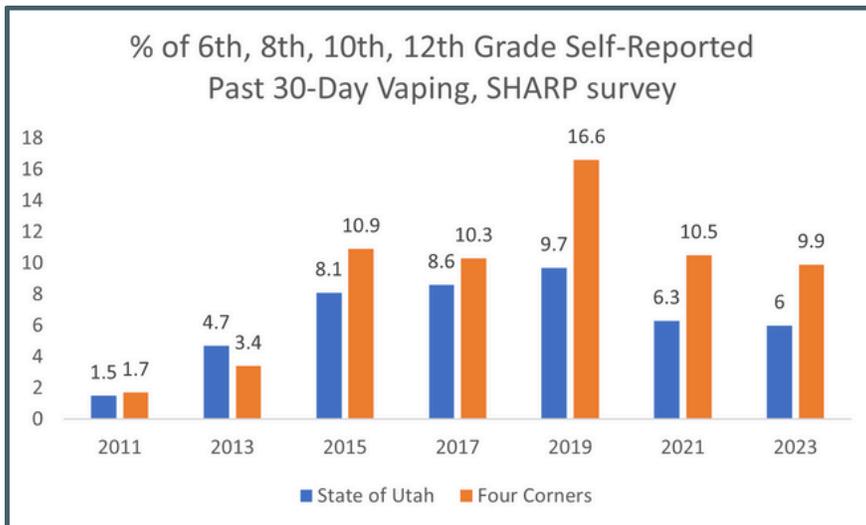


Fig. 2 (above): SHARP data shows that youth e-cigarette use is consistently higher in the Four Corners District than in the rest of the state. Programs that are specifically targeted toward issues rural teens face are needed in our area. Be Epic uses the SHARP survey to identify trends and provide needed programs.

- **Poor family management,**
- **Family conflict,**
- **Early initiation of substance use,**
- **Attitudes favorable to antisocial behavior and substance use,**
- **Intention to use substances, and others.**

Evidence-based programs are then identified and implemented to target these specific risk factors.

## Objectives of Be Epic, Escape the Vape

### Teacher Education

Provide in-service training and consultation for 5-12th grade teachers using the CATCH My Breath Vape Prevention Program and other evidence-based resources.

### Parent Education

Educate parents on vaping-reduction strategies and increase their confidence to communicate with youth about substance use using a variety of evidence-based resources.

### Youth Education

Implement after-school youth programs focused on building resilience, confidence, and skills to decline tobacco products.

### Community Outreach

Increase community knowledge of the harms of vaping and the importance of protective factors in preventing youth e-cigarette use by engaging in and supporting local coalitions and community events and disseminating prevention information.

### Social Media Campaign

Disseminate information using a community-wide social media campaign to reduce misinformation surrounding e-cigarettes and vaping and promote protective factors in families.



Figure 3 (right)  
Sample image from  
Be Epic Social media  
campaign

## Programs Used: 2020-2024



From 2020-2024, Be Epic Coordinators have trained teachers at almost every k-12 school in Carbon, Emery, and Grand Counties on the use of the evidence-based CATCH My Breath youth vaping prevention curriculum. CATCH My Breath is free for teachers to use and aligns with national and state health education standards. It also includes a variety of supplemental STEM, P.E., and Humanities lesson plans.

Through the trainings, teachers are taught the basics of e-cigarettes, why they are a concern, and how to access and use the curriculum in the classroom.

Be Epic also utilizes CATCH My Breath resources for parent/guardian education events and youth afterschool programs. ([catch.org/program/vaping-prevention/](http://catch.org/program/vaping-prevention/))



The Blues Program is an evidence-based wellbeing program geared toward teens with mild symptoms of depression and anxiety. It is based on cognitive behavioral strategies that teach emotional resilience and reduce low mood and anxious thoughts. It was offered to teens in Carbon, Emery, and Grand Counties via Zoom. ([bluesprogram.org](http://bluesprogram.org))



An adapted version of the Discover 4-H Building Confidence curriculum is used in our afterschool programming for 5th-8th graders. Lessons focus on building resilience through skills that increase confidence. It also includes vaping prevention activities and information from CATCH My Breath.

([extension.usu.edu/confidence-project/](http://extension.usu.edu/confidence-project/))



The Active Parenting of Teens: Families in Action curriculum was offered to parent/teen dyad groups in Carbon, Emery, and Grand Counties. The program is taught over the course of 4-6 sessions and is designed to strengthen relationships between parents and teens by breaking down communication barriers, promoting cooperation, and addressing challenges parents and teens face. ([activeparenting.com](http://activeparenting.com))

**Learn more at [extension.usu.edu/be-epic/](http://extension.usu.edu/be-epic/)**

Utah State University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution and is committed to a learning and working environment free from discrimination. For USU's non-discrimination notice, see [equity.usu.edu/non-discrimination](http://equity.usu.edu/non-discrimination).



**BE EPIC**  
ESCAPE the VAPE

# Impacts of Be Epic, Escape the Vape

During 2020-2024, Be Epic had great success implementing vape-prevention programming in each of the target areas, and has plans for future impacts as grant funding will continue through 2026.

## 4 YEARS OF IMPACTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN CARBON, EMERY, AND GRAND COUNTIES INCLUDE:

**267**  
Youth  
participated in Be Epic youth vaping prevention programming

**367**  
Parents  
and guardians attended youth vape- prevention dinners and webinars

**135**  
Teachers  
Participated in CATCH My Breath Vape Prevention curriculum trainings

**Over 25**  
Community Events  
attended where prevention information was shared

**51**  
Parents and Teens  
Participated in Active Parenting of Teens: Families in Action workshops

**500,862**  
individuals reached through social media

**30,351** through organic reach | **495,454** through boosted posts

**8** UEAFCs & NEAFCs awards received and 2 time Best of State Awards for:

Distinguished Team	Marketing/Public Relations
Community Education	National Florence Hall
Innovative Program	Education-Best of State
Excellence in Teamwork	2023 and 2024
Diversity Team	

Parent and teacher interventions resulted in statistically significant increases in confidence and knowledge levels.

### Be Epic Escape the Vape Team 2024



Principal Investigator, Ashley Yauger, PhD



Co-Principal Investigator & Evaluator, Cris Meier, PhD



Co-Principal Investigator, Christina Pay, MSHE



Emery Site Coordinator, Christine Jensen, MSHE



Grand Site Coordinator, Maria Velasco, MA



Health & Wellness Prevention Coordinator, Jenna Hawks



Health & Wellness Prevention Coordinator, Shauna Carroll, BS



Health & Wellness Prevention Coordinator, Josie Hatch, BS



Program & Communications Coordinator, Kristin Hoch



**BE EPIC**  
ESCAPE the VAPE

See our current contact information and find additional resources at

[extension.usu.edu/be-epic/contact-us](https://extension.usu.edu/be-epic/contact-us)



Special thank you to our USU Extension Marketing team member Abbey Rindlisbacher, and Past team members: Cynthia Lyman, Jordyn Oman, Aspyr Benson, Ashley Butler, Jenna Hawks, Catherine Hansen, and Ashley Bunton.