



SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION PROGRAMS

The Substance Use Prevention workgroup advances prevention, harm-reduction, and community wellness across Utah. Through the signature program, the HEART Initiative, this team delivers trauma-informed, healing-centered programming and partners locally and nationally to address the opioid epidemic and other public health challenges. By combining education, research, and community engagement, the program strengthens protective factors, supports recovery, and promotes long-term health and resilience statewide.

HEART Initiative

The Health Extension: Advocacy, Research, and Teaching (HEART) Initiative is a statewide Utah State University Extension effort launched in 2018 to address the opioid overdose epidemic and related behavioral health challenges. What began as a multidisciplinary pilot has evolved into a comprehensive Extension platform delivering evidence-based prevention, harm reduction, workforce development, and community resilience programming. Through strong community partnerships and applied research, HEART supports rural and underserved Utah communities in strengthening prevention systems, expanding the behavioral health workforce, and improving overall wellbeing.



HEALTH EXTENSION
Advocacy. Research. Teaching.



Stigma Reduction & Harm Reduction



Strengthening Communities Ties



Prevention & Education



Resilience Building

Serving: **Statewide**

Quick Facts

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| 109 Publications and educational products | 58 Scholarly presentations offered | \$4,478,765 Grant funding secured |
| 127 Virtual lessons taught | 49,193 Virtual participants reached | 2,937 Naloxone kits distributed |
| 579 In-person lessons taught | 13,350 In-person participants reached | 1,298 Collaborative partners engaged |

HEART Bunch Videos

11 videos created



Be Epic: Escape the Vape

Be Epic, Escape the Vape delivers e-cigarette prevention programming to youth in rural communities. The program is designed to reduce tobacco use and prevent vaping initiation among youth, where rates of youth e-cigarette use are elevated.

~48,000 participants reached virtually

Serving: Carbon, Emery, & Grand Counties

TriCounty Overdose Prevention Program (TOPP)

TOPP is an initiative focused on reducing opioid misuse and overdose in rural communities across Utah's TriCounty region. TOPP works to strengthen community resilience, expand prevention education, and increase access to resources that help individuals and families avoid opioid-related harm.

~4,200 participants reached

Serving: Daggett, Duchesne, & Uintah Counties

Guiding Good Choices

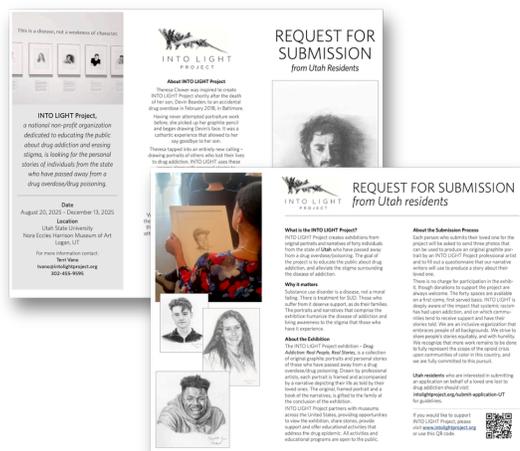
Guiding Good Choices helps parents strengthen communication and reduce youth substance-use risk through a brief, evidence-based workshop series.

8 educators trained

Into the Light Project

For International Overdose Awareness Day, USU Extension brought “A Light to Remember” to Logan, featuring the “Into Light Project” at the Nora Eccles Harrison Museum. The project featured powerful public exhibitions that shared the stories and portraits of individuals who have lost their lives to substance use disorder, helping to increase awareness and transform the conversation around substance use prevention.

Serving: Cache County



The author(s) of this content used Artificial Intelligence to review and reword content for clarity and brevity. Authors reviewed and edited the content provided by the AI tool and take full responsibility for the content.

In its programs and activities, including in admissions and employment, Utah State University does not discriminate or tolerate discrimination, including harassment, based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, status as a protected veteran, or any other status protected by University policy, Title IX, or any other federal, state, or local law.

Utah State University is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate or tolerate discrimination including harassment in employment including in hiring, promotion, transfer, or termination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, status as a protected veteran, or any other status protected by University policy or any other federal, state, or local law.

Utah State University does not discriminate in its housing offerings and will treat all persons fairly and equally without regard to race, color, religion, sex, familial status, disability, national origin, source of income, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Additionally, the University endeavors to provide reasonable accommodations when necessary and to ensure equal access to qualified persons with disabilities. The following office has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the application of Title IX and its implementing regulations and/or USU's non-discrimination policies: The Office of Equity in Distance Education, Room 400, Logan, Utah, titleix@usu.edu, 435-797-1266. For further information regarding non-discrimination, please visit equity.usu.edu, or contact: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 800-421-3481, ocr@ed.gov or U.S. Department of Education, Denver Regional Office, 303-844-5695 ocr.denver@ed.gov.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Kenneth L. White, Senior Vice President for Statewide Enterprise and Utah State University Extension.



Extension
UtahStateUniversity

