

Educating local refugee and immigrant populations through community partnerships

Substance Use in Young People: A Community Training



Photo: Participants at the training

The Office of Refugee Resettlement through Catholic Charities of Maine asked Healthy Androscoggin to conduct a training for refugee and immigrant parents in the community due to a concern about youth use of substances. In August of 2020, Vicky Wiegman, Substance Use Prevention Coordinator and Counselor for Lewiston Public Schools along with Emily Dooling Hamilton and Heritier Nosso, Healthy Androscoggin staff, led a workshop of Substance Use in Young People. This training, adapted from materials shared by the Opportunity Alliance (public health program) Community Conversation in South Portland, **covered tobacco, cannabis, alcohol, and medications**. The training was held in-person, following all CDC guidelines and protocols for COVID-19, with virtual presenters.

A total of **10 participants** who were either refugees or asylum seekers took part in the presentation with interpretation in French and Swahili.

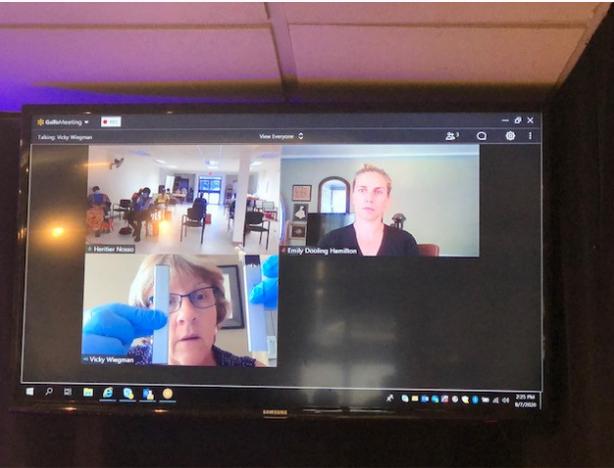
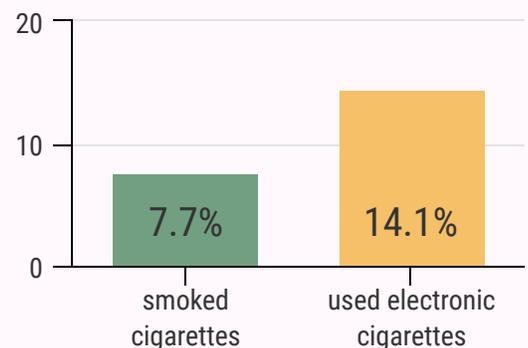


Photo: Screenshot of virtual presentation. Presenter showing a juul.

“Thank you for organizing this workshop. We would like to ask you to continue to organize these events and continue to invite us.” –Participant

Rationale:

Based on the 2019 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey, % of high school youth in Androscoggin County who have used tobacco in the last 30 days.



“I am very content of the information, as I have young kids, this knowledge will allow me to better educate them and be stricter and straightforward. I will be starting to observe them more than I use to do.”
– Participant

During the training, participants learned tips and tools to prevent youth from accessing and using substances, as well as additional resources and how to get help, if needed. Participants were also given flipbooks that mimicked the training, to take home with them. **The flipbooks were simple, easy to read, and included many images of the substances covered.** They also included a script and guide in Arabic, Swahili, and French so that participants can share the information with family members, friends, or neighbors.

This information is important for all parents and caregivers because **nicotine and vaping can cause youth to develop dependence quickly.**

Contact Healthy Androscoggin for more information at info@healthyandroscoggin.org or 207-795-5990

