

TNP Marijuana Committee 12/2/21

Present: Pete King, Aniella Fignon, Anamilena Moreno, Nina Chanana, Laila McGeorge, Margaret Watt (Excused: Denise Rollinson, Ginger Katz)

1. Updates

- a. **Laila** has connected with Dr Nye (NCC professor) and the head of nursing at NCC, and one of the students we met at Fresh Check Day is also engaging with us directly.
- b. Roton may have started pilot testing the “In the Air” vaping prevention curriculum. **Laila** will follow up for feedback.
- c. Pete, Tory, Margaret attended the Johnny’s Ambassadors informational presentation (by Laura Stack). They want people or organizations to pay to be ambassadors & then deliver their presentations (1 for teens and 1 for parents). Pete, Margaret & Nina also watched a 30 minute program that Laura gave for a CT coalition, which had good content. It was engaging, kept people informed. Very focused on the potency (how it’s like an illicit drug) & the mental health impact, particularly psychosis. She also reflected on what has been happening in Colorado over the past 10 years. Will be available in Spanish.
 - i. She can record a ½ hour presentation for us for \$250.
 - ii. The Ambassadors program is worth considering. For an organization, \$999 annually; for an individual \$299 annually. (These are the confirmed prices.) Info will be updated annually by their expert panel and they have a graphics consultant.
- d. HIDTA sent out a warning to the public about fentanyl in marijuana (39 cases of overdose in CT with no opioid involvement). CT was first state to test for it in cannabis.
 - i. Harm reduction strategies: If you use marijuana, have Narcan. Use this in trainings.
- e. Aniella recommends informational book as unbiased and very helpful:
<https://debeaumont.org/books/cannabis-moving-forward-protecting-health/>
- f. Aniella is writing a policy brief for the health department about the issues related to legalizing marijuana at the local level. Will continue conversation with Deanna D’Amore (health director) and Margaret.
- g. Vaping is back up in the NHS bathrooms, lots of fire alarms reported by Grace.
 - i. **ACTION:** Get the numbers of vaping incidents from both high schools – ask Sgt Orr or principals (**ask Diamond**)
 - ii. Teens can post quitting resources as well as raising awareness about vaping in the restrooms
- h. Aniella asked how much do students know about cannabis use disorder? Teachers don’t know much about it – we were only just in November able to do professional development for the health teachers around cannabis.
 - i. Cannabis Use Disorder (CUD) is relatively unknown – we’ve been pushing the information that marijuana is addictive – Cannabis-Induced Psychosis (CIP) is a new diagnosis
 - ii. Aniella asked about fentanyl test strips for cannabis. Margaret’s comments: Can be purchased from DanceSafe or by registering as a needle exchange. Not necessarily a great option for testing vape products. The test strips are actually urine test strips also used to test drugs prior to use.

2. Discussion of meetings with elected officials

- a. Plan for a mid-January meeting with our state legislators around the new law
 - i. Purpose: Educate & inform legislators about areas of the new cannabis law requiring attention ahead of the coming legislative session, since CGA will be developing proposed amendments to the law. (Session starts early February)
 - ii. Format: Conversational. We will have knowledgeable stakeholders from our coalition & MJ committee (esp. police, health, treatment, schools/YSB – others as interested) sit down with our state reps to share comments about the new law from their perspectives, answer legislators’ questions, discuss ideas as a group.
 - iii. Recommendation: Hold the session jointly with Westport coalition so there are more stakeholders and because Rep. Steinberg from Westport is Public Health Committee co-chair

- iv. **ACTIONS:** **Margaret** will reach out to key stakeholders from our coalition and will talk with Westport coalition - after talking with Westport we can set a date
- b. Meetings with local policy makers
 - i. Role for local policy makers: designate a public space for marijuana consumption; possible ordinances around outlet density, advertising restrictions, etc.
 - ii. Groups to meet with: Planning & Zoning (P&Z); Common Council; Common Council Public Safety & General Government Committee* (*new committee name – Aniella shared list of revised committee structure – possibly other committees eventually as well)
 - 1. Who to meet with in what order?
 - 2. Ordinances are created by a dept, then go to a committee, then to the Common Council
 - iii. Aniella recommends that TNP come up with criteria to be used in identifying the public consumption space, then get a list of public places from P&Z and discuss options with stakeholders (police, etc.)
- c. **ACTIONS:**
 - i. **Nina** to get info & images from Milford showing the impact on a business district/ community of a lot of outlets, advertising – what can happen without zoning decisions
 - ii. **Margaret** will reach out to Lou Schulman from Zoning Commission
 - 1. Have they discussed the designated public space – or anything else related to cannabis (eg outlet density)?
 - 2. Who should we start with to discuss this – the Commission, the Department, a Common Council committee?
 - 3. Can we help with criteria? Who do we sit down with?
 - iii. **Aniella** will look into criteria for designating public consumption space that may have been used in other states
 - iv. **Margaret** will email the statewide cannabis group to see if other communities have identified criteria for their public space designation

3. Messaging

- a. No updates from Diamond/Anthony about digital signage at mall or Wendy about next steps re: signage at NCC – however, cannot run videos, would need text only for signs at school buildings or text/graphic but not video for NCC
 - i. Postponed: Work on sample texts for this type of signage
 - ii. Coming soon: three short animated PSAs - 1 on potency, another on addiction/negative health outcomes on the developing brain, and the last on safe storage. There will also be social media posts, an infographic, lawn signs, and graphics for billboards/signage, etc. Still not available to preview