

## TNP Marijuana Committee

2/2/23, 4-5:30pm

**Present:** Jeff Santo (RIPPLE), Ginger & Larry Katz (Courage to Speak Foundation), Nicole Hampton (person in recovery/ parent), AnaVivian Estrella (Human Services), Kelly Tomlinson (Health Dept), Dajuan Wiggins (YBI), Margaret Watt (Positive Directions / parent)

1. Introductions were made. (Dajuan's first meeting!)
2. Legislation
  - a. Legislative forum took place last month: good turnout, good feedback, a number of bill concepts were introduced by legislators. Margaret circulated a document listing the marijuana-related bills a couple of weeks ago.
  - b. Public hearing yesterday on flavored vapes was circulated.
  - c. Larry noted that lawsuits have been filed about the cannabis licensing process in CT.
  - d. Nicole asked about the public hearing for Rep Marra's bill, which is not set yet. Margaret used the question to show how to find bills on the CGA.ct.gov website.
  - e. Nicole asked about funding for prevention at the Norwalk delegation legislative forum last night. Bob Duff and Lucy Dathan talked about funding for vaping /cigarettes.
  - f. Dajuan is concerned about the possibility of recriminalizing cannabis and opposed to having consequences for underage possession of cannabis that are the same as consequences for underage possession of alcohol. Need for education of officers and others.
  - g. Nicole agrees on education, saying that's why the funding for prevention is so important. Nicole also notes that there need to be laws / enforcement as well as education.
  - h. Margaret commented that the state's cannabis law is a 180 in terms of criminalization - there are now no consequences for youth related to marijuana. Prevention science shows that we need all 7 strategies in place, including consequences. Discussion about need for consequences that are supportive: screening, referral for treatment, etc. The underage alcohol possession consequences, which we'd like to see in place for marijuana, involve delaying or suspending a teen's driver's license for a brief period, a fine, and a referral to youth services/JRB—not court.
    - i. ACTION: Check on what happens under the alcohol law if a teen has their license suspended for underage alcohol possession but offends again during that time. Is it a referral to drug counseling at that point?
  - i. Norwalk lacks consequences for youth - at school (Nicole), Rowayton / Bailey Beach (Jeff).
3. Education:
  - a. Discussion about education for parents, teens, using our data. Need for kids to get the messages at home (parents!), school and community.
    - i. ACTION: Dig into the data more, using health equity lens. Margaret will share more of the substance use data for people to digest (beyond last week's coalition meeting.)
  - b. Kids:

- i. Ana: Awareness of the risks, short- and long-term, so you can make informed decisions. Needed for kids and parents.
  - ii. Kelly: Tap into teens' longer-term goals (eg motherhood). They are less aware of or afraid of consequences - feel invincible.
  - iii. Margaret: MOST aren't using substances - need to keep it that way - let them know they're in the majority.
- c. Health teachers:
- i. Positive Directions has been providing education and resources to the health teachers since last year.
  - ii. Some are less aware / less interested in info around marijuana.
- d. Parents:
- i. Huge influence but ongoing challenge of how to reach them - we've done postcards, videos, etc. Need to get the schools to make things like our Freshman Forum required so we can reach them all. (We've discussed this with NPS for 2 years but thus far no.)
  - ii. Edibles incident at BMHS a couple of weeks ago: TNP sent materials to the NPS Communications Office but nothing was sent home to parents. Missed opportunity to be raising awareness on a regular basis
  - iii. ACTION: Go to BOE
- e. Community:
- i. FOLLOW-UP: Margaret will check back with Josh about the signage
  - ii. Landlord at 25 Van Zant was looking for a tenant to be a grower. Dajuan mentioned an app that shows where you can grow cannabis.
  - iii. QUESTION: We don't believe Norwalk hasn't granted any permits yet so that location / app may not be accurate for Norwalk.

4. Environmental Scan / Compliance Checks:

- a. No one from NPD in attendance. Sgt Gulino connected Margaret with officer in charge of compliance checks who said that the officers do retailer education at the time of the check. We should revisit the broader idea / role of coalition working with retailers. Maybe they'd be more receptive.