

TNP Marijuana/Vaping Committee

3/2/23

Present: AnaVivian Estrella (City Community Services), Kelley Tomlinson (Health Dept), Nicole Hampton (person in recovery and parent), Diamond Sead (School-Based Health Centers & parent), Ginger Katz (Courage to Speak foundation), Denise Rollinson (Norwalk Community Health Center), Diana Revolus (Common Council), Ben fitzgerald (AmeriCorps & youth), Margaret Watt (Positive Directions & parent), Dayna Macari (Positive Directions & parent)

1. Updates:

- a. Yesterday was the first day for P&Z to receive retail cannabis applications. They received one for 19 Main Ave and one for 430 Main Ave. These will be posted on the [applications page](#) this week. Review will start next week, and a public hearing is likely next month.
- b. Briefly discussed new CBD Advisory & chart issued by SAMHSA to raise awareness that there may be health risks from CBD and ensure people know it's unregulated in any way:
<https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/pep22-06-04-003.pdf>
 - i. Zoe and friends (9th grade) thought CBD was safe and FDA approved: another misperception to clarify

2. Discussed most important communications based on our 2022 Norwalk Youth Survey data

- a. What was most striking to each of us about the data?
 - i. Ben - some of the kids who vape reported they vape any / all substances and don't even know what they're vaping
 - ii. Ana - kids think everyone's doing it but they're not
 1. We have stats on current use by grade and by substance
 2. We have stats on how prevalent the students THINK substance use is among their peers
 - iii. Dayna - kids think it's not addictive
 - iv. Kelley - substance use is low but grows over time - build the resiliency ahead of time
 - v. Kelley - Most kids felt their parents disapprove - build that up!
 - vi. Ginger - majority don't use drugs - but concerned about both who use and those who don't and are around it - surprising how low the current use is
 - vii. Ginger - Some kids Larry talked to at a Fairfield County school didn't even think marijuana was a drug (alcohol either). "Did you know alcohol is a drug? Did you know MJ is a drug?"
 - viii. Margaret - youth perception of risk is too low across all substances, and marijuana is seen as the least harmful of all substances (however have just presented again to health teachers to raise their awareness)
 - ix. Margaret - 9% of NORwalk teens who use marijuana get it at home *with* parents' knowledge
 - x. Nicole - NPD and NPS have mandate for progressive consequences related to substance use - but only arrested 3 kids this past year when it was the 7th or 8th time they were caught
 1. Also surprised that 20% don't know about the resources
 - xi. Diamond - (awareness of services in the community, kids unsupervised after school)
- b. Kids need to know:
 - i. marijuana poses risks to brain development, IQ, addiction for teens -
 1. can affect test performance, SATs, etc. - could affect the college you want to go to
 2. Can affect your sports performance

- 3. Affects your concentration
- 4. Affects fertility (longer term goals)
- ii. Our recording of Jordan's recovery story is valuable b/c he's their age, local / recent
- c. Adults need to know:
 - i. marijuana poses risks to brain development, IQ, addiction for teens
 - ii. Marijuana concentrates, how strong it is today...
 - iii. Marijuana dangerous for lactating / pregnant women
- d. Everyone needs to know:
 - i. Resources when you have a problem / cessation
- 3. Samples of existing messages
 - a. SAMHSA infographic: [MARIJUANA - THE RISKS ARE REAL](#)
 - i. Comments: We wanted to have a bilingual, graphics-based poster at points of sale - could this fit the bill? Ben & Ana - yes, easy to look at and even if you just look at pictures and headings, you gain awareness without reading the rest
 - ii. ACTION: See what other languages it's available in
 - b. CT toolkit (audio in Eng & Span and English images for bus / billboards: [Be in the Know Toolkit](#))
 - i. Comments: minimal info provided (1 image that mentions brain development). Can be a decent starting place and we would add on
 - ii. ACTION: find out whether Be In The Know CT toolkit is available in other languages? (Does not appear so.) Also: Are they going to pay or the media buy so we can just fill in gaps, or is every community supposed to do it locally?
 - c. Property signs example: [No Drugs Safety Signs from ComplianceSigns.com](#)
 - i. Norwalk schools don't have any signage about substance use on their property, even though sales on school property are a felony. Many towns have signs on all school property. Absence of signs is its own message
 - ii. Meanwhile, we've been talking about signage at the beach and parks since people are using marijuana in those spaces assuming they're allowed to. Is Norwalk going to provide signs telling people which public spaces are on limits? We can design our own because it's an opportunity to provide a QR code with links, but this seems like it should be paid by the City
 - iii. School maintenance team is responsible for a certain amount of space outside building, then Parks & Rec after that
 - iv. DPH used to have some signs that said no smoking or vaping which they provided to the Health Dept
 - v. Signs should list / show each substances, not just "drugs"
 - d. Ensure Spanish and other languages
 - e. ACTION: Margaret & Kelley will meet

Next time: Look at any adjustments to work plan below (which goes through September) and discuss any new strategies through next year

1. **increasing the % youth who perceive MJ as harmful** (through our peer-to-peer trainings for youth; training for health teachers; recovery stories; parent trainings)
2. **decreasing % youth who perceive little disapproval of MJ from their peers** (through using youth as peer educators, creating Teen Nights Out to provide fun substance-free events)
3. **decreasing % adults who believe youth have easy access** (promoting Social Host Law, signage at retailers, Lock it up messaging, freshman forum, working with Ordinance and P&Z, educational materials to retailers, legislative forum)
4. **decreasing use of MJ in public spaces** (work with Ordinance / P&Z to identify safer designated public consumption space, support law enforcement)