



Cannabis and Your Town:

Considerations for Youth Substance Misuse Prevention

August 31, 2020

Q and A

Anonymous Attendee 06:22 PM

How is this conversation not political when so far all we are being shown is negative impacts that are “well established” but only anecdotal with no peer reviewed studies? Ex. You can’t test cannabis on pregnant women so there is no proven link between cannabis and birth weight.

Brad Roberts 06:47 PM

There are actually quite a number of studies on cannabis in pregnancy. I would refer you to the ACOG website (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists) to see their position statement. There is a well referenced statement there. The statements made were not meant to be political- I have tried to quote the medical literature from large peer reviewed studies.

Anonymous Attendee 06:23 PM

Aren’t these tragic cases better treated now with legalization rather than not knowing which taboo/illegal substance was taken?

Brad Roberts 06:50 PM

Actually I started out feeling that way. However it is a regular occurrence to see patients with psychotic symptoms that do indeed have tragic consequences. These were not present prior to legalization. I believe the higher potency is certainly a component of this. Perhaps we are better at recognizing this than prior but I think the increased prevalence of these presentations outweighs this benefit- just my personal opinion.

Anonymous Attendee 06:25 PM

Wouldn’t it help avoid paranoia if we can regulate adult cannabis products with proper dosage, rather than our children getting it on the street in unknown concentrations?

Brad Roberts 06:54 PM

I also felt this way initially. However it has not really been regulated as I would have hoped. Products approach 99% THC in dabs and there is no known dosing. Flower percentage of THC has gone from about 2% to 20%. If it went through a pharmacy I believe that may be the case but as it stands, it goes through a dispensary which in comparison to a pharmacy is unregulated. Pediatric poisonings by poison center calls for cannabis have gone up yearly since legalization.

Kate Donnelly 06:26 PM

Has research specifically tied these symptoms/rates to THC? Has research included CBD use?

Brad Roberts 06:57 PM

I am not sure specifically what symptoms you may be referring to but ongoing research is trying to discern what may be impacting that. There seems to be clear correlations with increasing THC% and symptomatic severity and frequency of occurrence. As far as how the other components what are in cannabis such as CBD may affect this, as far as I am aware there is ongoing research into this.

Psychologist Erik Erikson talks about addiction in relation to essential satisfaction. I was curious about your take on that. Essential satisfaction is what most people feel if they live in a society that meets their basic needs for four things: belonging, identity, meaning and purpose. When these needs are not met, humans are prone to addiction. We know that our society is increasingly fractured and that the consumer society we were raised to cherish is actually making us sick. How do you make sense of this in your research?

Brad Roberts 07:02 PM

I think that is interesting. Certainly substance dependence is multi-factorial. To be clear I am ER doc and not an addiction psychiatrist. However I do believe that what you mentioned makes sense. Any addiction or substance dependence are related to abnormalities in dopamine functioning in the the brain. Dopamine is also related to happiness and satisfaction. This would make sense to me from that standpoint.

Anonymous Attendee 06:38 PM

You mention racism is a problem and has gotten worse because of legalization? Can you tell that to the 600,000 people in jail for drug crimes, most of whom are people of color?

Scott Schulle 06:59 PM

I think the statement is more around policy considerations. Marijuana had been criminalized for so long, and with the legalization, the existing laws pre-legalization need to be reviewed and changed to reflect what legalizations are

Anonymous Attendee 06:39 PM

Can presenters please call the plant by its name, cannabis, rather than the racist anti-Mexican term “marijuana?”

This question has been answered live. - *They shared that they are using the word marijuana as that is the wording in the Colorado legislation. (Note: HLV supports of the use of the word cannabis. Thank you for drawing our attention to this.)*

Erik Volk 06:48 PM

Does Colorado require businesses involved with the cultivation, processing or sales of cannabis products to complete any education/training requirements prior to being licensed or authorized?

Scott Schulle 07:01 PM

I will look more closely into this one. I know the requirements to operate come from the State level, locally, our inspectors review standards for septic and pesticide use and making sure the facility itself is sanitary. However, the State Department of Revenue addresses the requirements for business. If I'm unable to find this before the meeting ends, I will provide information to Alison for follow-up afterward

Added follow- up: The State of Colorado's requirements can be found at

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/marijuana/retail-marijuana-licensees>. Note it is mentioned each community can have more strict requirements for businesses to obtain a license.

Kate Donnally 06:54 PM

Does your community (primary care offices, schools, etc.) do any ACES (Adverse Childhood Events) screenings? If so, have ACES studies been cross correlated with THC use?

Sarah Martinez 07:05 PM

Our county does provide ACEs screening with new parents through hospital and non-profit referral. There have been no formal studies regarding indirect correlations between parents' use of cannabis and ACEs scores.

Brad Roberts 07:05 PM

We do! Our substance abuse coalition talks about this often in our treatment of substance dependence in general. I do not know if this has been looked at for THC specifically. I think that would be a great area of future research.

Anonymous Attendee 06:58 PM

Comment on the chronic absenteeism rate in Pueblo. Dr. Randall in Nov. 2019, showed slides discussing - 38% chronic absenteeism. Has this improved? If so how and what initiatives were undertaken?

Brad Roberts 07:10 PM

Yes- Dr. Randall is one of my partners. COVID has certainly derailed any chance of knowing what is happening! Our schools do struggle with poverty- which I believe is the largest driver. My personal take is that for this to improve, we need our poverty rates to decrease. I do believe that substance abuse- no matter the substance- adversely impacts employment opportunities. To that end, our substance abuse coalition in Pueblo has gone to the middle schools and has given presentations to multiple schools on substance abuse in general and that has been very well received. I don't know if that answers the question but my take.

Melanie Sheehan 07:02 PM

This is important dialogue with, of course, pros and cons depending on personal beliefs and opinions. I think it would be very helpful if participants post with a name so that follow up and information sharing can happen.

Alison Link 07:07 PM

Thank you for this. We did give folks the option for anonymous response if they chose. We will think about how to help participants share information. Please let us know if you have any ideas.

Dare Chammings (she/hers) 07:08 PM

Michelle, any idea of WHEN we can expect district YRBS data?

Michelle Salvador 07:14 PM

I wish I did! All VDH employees are deployed to COVID work and have been since March. I myself am working directly on COVID and have much less time for my prevention work.

Anonymous Attendee 07:10 PM

Is there a way we could have links to the sources of this data?

Ashley Hill 07:11 PM

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/health-statistics-vital-records/population-health-surveys-data/youth-risk-behavior-survey-yrbs>

Anonymous Attendee 07:14 PM

Thank you for your comment. I'd suggest reaching out to school administrators to get their comments on what has been or is being done about chronic absenteeism.

Brad Roberts 07:23 PM

Thank you- certainly as a citizen and wanting our community to succeed it is something to work on- for sure!

Anonymous Attendee 07:16 PM

Also from Dr. Randall was comments about autism rates dramatically increasing in Headstart settings - used to be one/classroom, now 6-8/classroom. Is this directly correlated to marijuana and drugs during pregnancies or are there other factors influencing this - like vaccines?

Brad Roberts 07:20 PM

The honest answer is I don't know. It's an interesting statistic but beyond that I don't know that I can elaborate further. I would imagine it is likely multifactorial.

Erik Volk 07:20 PM

In Colorado, is there any negative impact on towns who choose to allow for cannabis sales if the towns receive Federal funds for any reason?

Scott Schulle 07:22 PM

We will look into this and provide a follow-up answer with Alison to send out to the registrants. As mentioned during the presentation, a lot of the studies are being presented and relayed in real-time.

Additional follow-up: Additional, non-biased/more focused studies would need to be conducted to relay information. Some evidence explains taxing revenues federally. Costs to communities are not accounted for in this information sharing. Other studies and information shared have a industry-focused bias which do not take costs to community into consideration. It would be important to contact local planning and development officials to look more closely into this and how it could impact local towns/communities.

Kate Donnelly 07:08 PM

Given the research presented related to psychiatric risks associated with cannabis use, and these numbers comparing youth use in VT with the country and neighboring states, does VT have higher rates of youth ED visits/psychosis/suicidality than neighboring states?

Erik Volk 07:16 PM

Is there any update on expected timeline of implementation in Vermont? It seemed previously that the House and the Senate were quite far apart in their proposed implementation timelines.

Anonymous Attendee 07:20 PM

Can communities ban pot shops from coming to their communities - or distance it further from their schools than 1000 feet which is the current language in S54? *This question was answered live.*

Melanie Sheehan 07:21 PM

Isn't it true that a town can opt in but use zoning to control outlet location and density?

This question was answered live.

You can view a recording of this event and hear the questions that were answered live at:

www.healthylamoillevalley.org/cannabis-and-your-town.

For more information, contact Alison Link at alison@healthylamoillevalley.org.