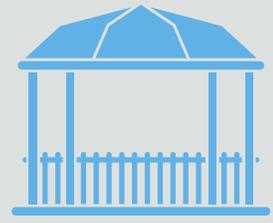


CANNABIS AND YOUR TOWN



90% of adults who experience substance use disorders began using substances before the age of 18.*

"Our responsibility is to reduce the risk in our communities that lead to substance misuse and increase the factors that protect our youth through intentional planning." (HLV Community Planning Toolkit)

DATA CONSIDERATION

Data, on cannabis and the legalized market's impact on communities and individuals, is debated frequently. You can find articles on data related to your own views and opposing views and it can be difficult and overwhelming to determine what is true and what is most important to consider. Therefore, it is the understanding of the data, sources and application to our communities that we hope to support through this information. (Cont. on p. 2)

TIMING

There is NO rush to vote. Weigh the pros and cons of the timing of a vote. Consider who is being prioritized and who benefits. Rulemaking will evolve for a number of years.

Introduction

Our residents and municipalities have been given a great responsibility to set public health policy which will impact our community, especially our youth. Policy affects everyone in a community, regardless of individual opinions and viewpoints and can have lasting implications.

Process

Having a clear and intentional process allows you to consider the impacts on youth, vulnerable populations, and your specific community needs.

Step 1: Workgroup

- Establish a cannabis research committee / working group for your town (Use HLV's Toolkit!)
- Gather information
 - Conduct a town survey
 - Assess the demand on local and regional services
 - Facilitate info sessions
 - Share findings with town residents

Steps 2: Survey

Survey your town prior to a vote.**

- What do your town's residents, businesses and service providers think and need?
- What factors are most important?
- What regulations will help protect youth?
- Consider the # of stores and the impact of those locations?

**It is recommended that this be done before warning the vote, but could be done at any point in the process.

Step 3: Info Sessions

- Hold accessible community info sessions.
- What does your community want to know more about?
 - What is the best way for your town to provide for comprehensive education and community conversation?

Who are the stakeholders in your community?

Schools, youth, parents, law enforcement, medical, mental health and emergency services, retailers, cannabis industry, community organizations, town entities

Step 4: Local Cannabis Control Commission

- Establish a Cannabis Control Commission (CCC) for your town (before or after an opt-in vote).
- Review your town's existing regulations
 - Consider strengthening or expanding regulations to protect youth: buffer zones (from schools, areas where youth congregate, recovery centers and even other retail outlets), advertising, outlet density, site plan review standards, hours of operation, nuisance laws, etc.
 - Decide what the town wants to ask and require of licensees, if retail passes.



It's not just about cannabis. Look towards reviewing your town's regulations and Town Plan for potential enhancements related to all substances.

Engage with our HLV Community Planning Toolkit for a comprehensive process.
www.healthylamoillevalley.org/community-policy-toolkit

*Data from the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University

More information for municipal leaders:
www.healthylamoillevalley.org/retail-cannabis

(Continued from page 1) Based in science, we know that when we increase access and availability of substances in our communities; when our community laws and community norms support and promote use of substances; and when there is a low perception of harm of the use of substances by youth, that young people begin to use earlier in life. Young people who begin using substances during this critical time of their brain's development, increase the likelihood that they will develop substance use dependency during their lifetime as opposed to people who use after the age of 25 when their brains are developed. (Sources: Risk & Protective Factors - Hawkins & Catalano, Other data - SAMSHA & CDC)

Cannabis: Key Information to Consider

- Cannabis is addictive, according to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and cannabis legalization tends to correlate with a decreased perception of harm among youth.
- Cannabis legalization tends to increase the overall rate of cannabis use which makes it even more important to impose youth safeguards, according to a recent NIH study.
- Research says that about 1 in 10 people who use marijuana may become addicted/dependent — and 1 in 6 when use begins before age 18 (SAMHSA, NIH) Find out more about youth impacts at: <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/marijuana>.
- Currently, medical marijuana in Vermont has no THC limit and the VT cap of 60% THC (concentrates) and 30% (flower) is still a dangerously high concentration level with known side effects. The cannabis plant has been genetically modified over the years to increase potency; this is no longer the 2-3% of the past.
- 2020 research from NIDA suggested that smoking high potency marijuana every day can increase the chances of developing psychiatric disorders, including psychosis, schizophrenia and depression, anxiety and substance use disorders. The amount of the drug used, the age of first use and genetic vulnerability have all been shown to influence this relationship.

Key Vermont Data to Know

- Vermont has the highest youth marijuana rate in the country. In 2018 VT ranked #1 for use in the past month for 12-17 year olds with 12.67% using (National Marijuana Initiative).
- More than 55% of the 959 Vermonters treated for cannabis use by state providers from July 2018 to June 2019 were under the age of 25, according to the data from the Vermont Department of Health. The data also showed that 80% of these 12 to 17-year-olds were treated for cannabis dependence.
- Active use of cannabis among Vermont young adults 18-25 has increased from 39% of 46% in the past six years, according to the Vermont Young Adult Survey. In 2020, almost half (45%) of young adults who reported cannabis use in the survey said they had used it for 20 or more of the past 30 days.
- Notably, the data shows those at risk of significantly higher rates of cannabis use among vulnerable populations in Vermont to include: 1) those experiencing housing and food and security, 2) LGBTQ+ youth, 3) those with pre-existing mental health conditions and 4) students of color (Marijuana Use In Vermont, VDH).

Lamoille Valley Cannabis Data Local numbers are higher than Vermont state averages

2019 YRBS - Lamoille County Last 30 Day Marijuana Use

Middle School 8% (VT 5%) High School 28% (VT 27%)

2019 YRBS - Lamoille County Age of First Use (By Age 11 for Middle Schoolers, Age 13 for High School Students)

Middle School 2% (VT 1%) High School 8% (VT 6%)

Additionally, related to cannabis between 2013 and 2019 Youth Perception of Harm decreased by 6%. Perception of Parental Disapproval decreased by 11%. (VT YRBS) While youth marijuana use did not decrease in this time period, the trend for other substance use (alcohol and tobacco, excluding vaping) decreased.

By bringing retail cannabis into our communities we are potentially exposing our youth and most vulnerable to even greater risk than the data already demonstrates. This is why it is important to put safeguards in place. Creating a low impact environment will take advance planning and care.

Visit our website to learn more and get connected. HealthyLamoilleValley.org