

**HEALTH, SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL & ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD IN THE
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
ROOM #318
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

Chairwoman Addonizio, Legislators Gouldman & Sayegh

Monday

March 18, 2019

(Immediately following the Economic Development Mtg. beginning at 6:30pm)

The meeting was called to order at 7:17 P.M. by Chairwoman Addonizio who requested that Legislator Sayegh lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislators Gouldman, Sayegh, and Chairwoman Addonizio were present.

Item #3 - Discussion/State Potentially Legalizing Recreational Use of Marijuana

Chairwoman Addonizio made a motion to waive the rules and accept the additional; Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. All in favor.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated New York State is currently considering legalizing recreational use marijuana. She stated currently, it is unknown if counties are going to be able to opt out of the legalization. She stated she has dire concerns regarding marijuana infused edibles such as cookies, brownies or gummy bears. She stated these are dangerous for young children. She stated she is on the New York State Association of Counties Standing Committee for Health, and these issues were discussed. She stated packaging regulations will only help if the items are left in package, if they are taken out and left for a child to find they could mistakenly ingest them. She introduced Executive Director of the Prevention Council of Putnam Kristin McConnell.

Executive Director McConnell thanked Chairwoman Addonizio for inviting her to speak about the issues surrounding the legalization of marijuana. She gave the attached PowerPoint presentation. She stated this topic is complex and there are many factors to consider including: health harms, addiction, public safety, mental illness, the black market, crime, and the environment. She showed a video of Dr. Kevin Sabet, CEO and President of Smart Approaches to Marijuana which works to educate the public. She stated the perception of risk of harm from marijuana has gone down, which means usage is more likely to increase. She stated legalizing marijuana would have a significant impact on the generation of youth that is growing up now. She stated marijuana would be normalized and there would be increased access and availability, which would lead people to believe marijuana is safe. She stated there is a misconception that marijuana must be legalized in order to decriminalize it. She stated there are three (3) separate issues with marijuana that get conflated which are medical marijuana, decriminalization, and recreational use. She stated marijuana does not need to be legalized for recreational use in order to reform the criminal justice system and social justice can be achieved through a decriminalization form of legislation. She stated there is extra danger with edibles because, hypothetically, people may not realize an edible technically has four (4) serving sizes in a

package. She continued to go over the facts provided in the attached PowerPoint. She provided the Committee with her citations for the information.

Chairwoman Addonizio made a motion to waive the rules and accept the additional; Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. All in favor.

Legislator Castellano requested clarification on the Prevention Needs Assessment Survey referenced on Slide five (5).

Executive Director McConnell stated it has been done since 2008 so there is 10 years' worth of baseline data. She stated it is now done in even years in all of the high schools. She stated it is analyzed by outside evaluators.

Legislator Castellano questioned how many students participate.

Deputy Commissioner of Social Services Joseph DeMarzo stated approximately 5,100 students are surveyed. He stated it is a very well done survey.

June Cothirst, Mahopac resident, questioned if other drugs are also included in the survey.

Executive Director McConnell stated it includes all drugs. She stated the results of the survey are available on The Prevention Council of Putnam's website.

Ms. Cothirst stated there is a big problem with "K2" and "Spice".

Executive Director McConnell stated this Legislature has tried to address these substances in the past. She stated it is difficult to control because the compounds in the drugs are changed so frequently.

Nicholas Kuvach, Putnam Valley resident, questioned what The Prevention Council's position on legalization of marijuana is.

Executive Director McConnell stated The Prevention Council does not take a position, it is an educational body.

Mr. Kuvach stated all drugs should be legal under strict regulations and control.

Marcia Baldwin, Mahopac resident, stated she is also concerned about the potency of the drugs that are available. She stated only through legalization can what is available be regulated. She stated this is similar to the alcohol issue during the Prohibition era. She stated she disagrees that marijuana is a gateway drug.

Scott Reing, Carmel resident, stated it seems through the statistics provided in the PowerPoint that marijuana use has already been normalized. He stated he believes that people should be responsible for their own actions.

Sheriff Robert Langley told the story of a wrong-way driver who caused six (6) deaths while driving under the influence of alcohol and marijuana. He talked about the effects of marijuana on drivers. He stated this issue should be put up to a public vote. He stated the number of crimes will increase. He noted the amount of cash marijuana dispensaries will hold, making them targets. He stated THC wax can be up to 99% potency. He stated mental health is already a problem in our community and would be harmed by the legalization of marijuana. He stated there will be a ripple effect from the cost of legalization. He stated legalization would be a step backwards.

Tom Higgins, Putnam Valley resident, questioned if decriminalization would have the same drastic effects.

Sheriff Langley stated decriminalization only effects the sentencing. He acknowledged the benefits of medical marijuana. He stated if marijuana is legal people will be more able to sell it to kids on school grounds.

Ms. Cothirst requested more information on the driving statistics regarding marijuana use.

Sheriff Langley stated the Colorado Department of Transportation survey found that 69% of self-identified marijuana users admitted to driving after marijuana use. He stated traffic deaths involving drivers who tested positive for marijuana more than doubled between 2013 and 2017.

Yvette Morello, Carmel resident, questioned if there is going to be a counter-argument provided, supporting the legalization.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated anyone can state their opinion.

Ms. Morello questioned if anyone supporting the legalization was invited to speak.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated they can be invited at a future meeting.

Kathleen Foley, Philipstown resident, questioned what age would be able to purchase marijuana in the current bill.

Sheriff Langley stated 21. He stated the brain continues to develop until 25.

Ms. Foley questioned if the State has considered a statewide referendum vote.

Legislative Counsel Robert Firriolo stated New York State cannot put this issue to a vote, only the State Legislature has the power.

Ms. Foley questioned if there is an "out" clause for counties.

Legislative Counsel Firriolo stated there are two (2) separate proposals. He stated in the Governor's budget there is a proposal to allow counties to license the sale of marijuana. He

stated there is also a bill in the State Legislature that would allow towns to do the licensing. He stated if the State legalizes marijuana, no county or town can say it is illegal there.

Legislator Sayegh stated Sheriff Langley made a valid point that this process is moving too quickly. She stated it does not allow the community time to adapt. She applauded Chairwoman Addonizio for bringing this issue forward for discussion.

Dennis Storen, Carmel resident, stated marijuana is addictive.

Ann Gerbath stated the statistics coming from Colorado should not be disputed because marijuana has been legalized there. She stated this decision should not be rushed into.

Frank Del Campo, Mahopac resident, stated marijuana is a danger to the children of this county. He stated it is a gateway drug. He stated he has seen the affects over his years working with the public.

Sheriff Langley stated his department only has two (2) drug recognition experts. He stated there is no chemical test for marijuana impairment like there is for alcohol. He stated impairment is observed for two (2) to three (3) hours after smoking. He stated after an hour, the amount of THC in the blood decreases 80-90% because it is settling into the brain. He stated since there is no chemical test, there needs to be psychomotor, behavioral, or cognitive test that would indicate the degree of driving impairment. He stated marijuana has been shown to impair critical driving related skills like reaction time, tracking ability, and target detection. He stated it also impairs cognitive skills such as judgement, anticipation, and divided attention. He stated drug recognition experts are highly trained. He stated if more are necessary, then it will be a burden on tax payers.

Steve McKay, Putnam Valley Councilman, stated Putnam Valley is passing a moratorium on where dispensaries can open. He agreed that legalization is moving too fast. He stated this is yet another issue that could affect children and there already enough issues that they need to deal with.

Dwight Arthur, Mahopac resident, stated marijuana is usually a gateway drug because people purchase it from the black market, where other drugs are available. He stated keeping marijuana illegal will keep the black market growing.

Sheriff Langley stated areas that have legalized marijuana still have a black market because they charge a lower price for the marijuana than the dispensaries.

Rebecah Ramirez, Cold Spring resident, stated there needs to be more information. She questioned how to become more informed. She questioned if there is any information about the successes of marijuana legalization. She stated she has found some information on DrugPolicy.org from Washington and Oregon. She questioned how long has the legalization been discussed by the State.

Legislative Counsel Firriolo stated this is the first year that the Governor's budget bill has included a recreational marijuana proposal. He stated this is a complicated change to the law. He stated it has essentially been two (2) and half months of debate.

Eileen Storen, Carmel resident, stated people are not always responsible and if marijuana is legalized it will be more acceptable.

Legislator Jonke questioned when the budget bill would be effective.

Legislative Counsel Firriolo stated he believes it would be the end of the year, but he is unsure.

Legislator Jonke stated he believes the State has become enamored with the idea of the potential tax revenue from the legalization and sale of marijuana.

Sheriff Langley stated the projected first year revenue is \$83 million which amounts to .0485% of the current State budget.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated she requested Senator Pete Harckham attend this meeting to provide his input on this matter.

Jordan Hardy of Senator Harckham's office stated this issue is very important to Senator Harckham. He stated Senator Harckham held a public forum at Mahopac High School pertaining to this issue. He stated Senator Harckham is taking all information into consideration.

Legislator Sayegh stated she attended Senator Harckham's forum. She commended Senator Harckham and Assemblyman Byrne listening to the public's input. She agreed that this matter is moving too quickly.

Legislator Sullivan thanked the public for their comments. He stated this process needs to slow down for more consideration. He stated there are many negative effects from marijuana. He stated he is very concerned about how this affects children. He stated the cost of this has not really been addressed. He stated this could potentially require another level of bureaucracy and an agency similar to the State Liquor Authority which could increase taxes.

Legislator Albano stated this issue comes down to protecting children from adverse effects. He stated if this is passed there needs to be strict laws and regulations.

Chairwoman Addonizio requested Commissioner of Social Services Michael Piazza's input.

Commissioner Piazza stated marijuana causes withdrawal symptoms, therefore it is a drug that causes addiction. He stated Colorado has reported much less revenue than expected. He stated the younger a person is, the more likely they are to become addicted. He acknowledged that certain drugs, including marijuana can be used medically.

Chairwoman Addonizio made a motion to waive the rules and accept the additional; Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. All in favor.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated this could potentially be discussed at a future meeting as well.

Legislator Castellano encouraged the public to continue expressing their opinions.

Item #4 - New York State Reproductive Health Act

a. Discussion/Chairwoman Addonizio

Chairwoman Addonizio stated she has concerns over the Reproductive Health Act (RHA) which was passed by New York State in January 2019. She stated in 1973 Roe v. Wade gave women the right to abortion within the first 24 weeks of pregnancy if the fetus was not viable or when necessary to preserve the life of the mother. She stated the RHA permits abortion up to 9 months when there is an absence of fetal viability or when necessary to preserve the mother's life or health. She stated the word "health" was not in the previous law. She questioned what the term "health" means, because the new law does not define it. She stated it could mean physical, emotional, or psychological. She stated the old law criminalized abortion unless it was a justifiable act, which meant to preserve a woman's life within 24 weeks. She stated the RHA removes the abortion related crimes, including violent acts that result in the loss of the child. She stated Roe v. Wade defined homicide as a conduct which causes the death of a person or unborn child which a female has been pregnant with for more than 24 weeks. She told the story of an army veteran who lost her 26 week old fetus due to a violent attack by her then-boyfriend. She stated he was charged with committing an illegal abortion. She questioned what will happen now that the RHA has taken out the criminal laws regarding abortion. She stated life ends when the heart stops beating and life begins when the heart starts beating. She stated heartbeats have been detected as early as four (4) and a half weeks due to technology that was not available in the 1970s. She read a letter into the record from Town of Carmel Supervisor Kenneth Schmitt regarding a resolution passed by the Carmel Town Board in support of repeal of the RHA.

Patricia Vizzelo questioned what the Town of Carmel resolution means.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated municipalities can make a statement regarding the RHA. She stated the RHA can only be repealed at the State level.

b. Approval/Express Concerns Over and Seek Repeal of Provisions in the New York State Reproductive Health Act

Legislator Nacerino stated she had requested this topic be on the agenda for this meeting. She stated when the RHA was passed Governor Cuomo called for New York landmarks to be lit up in pink in celebration of the law. She stated from her perspective this was morally and ethically abhorrent. She stated it is important to bring this resolution forward to have the voices of Putnam County heard. She applauded the Town of Carmel for also standing in opposition. She thanked Legislative Counsel Robert Firriolo for preparing a well-researched and comprehensive resolution for consideration. She stated for the Governor to pass this law while declaring himself a catholic is a travesty. She stated she cannot support blatant disregard for human life and denounces this legislation. She stated she believes that the majority of Putnam County agrees with her on this issue. She stated the RHA removed immediate legal protection for born alive

infants, which in essence, supports infanticide. She stated New York State has enacted legislation and protection for wildlife and endangered species, yet places less value on human life by offering no protection to a fetus by repealing the abortion related crimes law. She stated now late term abortions can be performed up until the moment of birth, when necessary to protect the woman's "health" which is not clearly defined. She read a quote from OBGYN Omar Hamada which stated there is not a single fetal or maternal condition that required third-trimester abortion. She read a quote from Dr. David Quindite which stated there is never a medical reason to kill a baby at term and if there is a danger to the mother's life sometimes a baby must be delivered early, but it is always with the intent to keep the baby safe as well. She read a quote from Cardinal Dolan which stated the Archdiocese of New York will give free confidential help to any woman facing an unplanned pregnancy, regardless of religion, to ensure that the mother never feels that she has to have an abortion. She stated this is not about a woman's right to choose, it is about the humanity of the baby.

Linda Cochrane, Putnam County Resident and CEO of Hopeline Pregnancy Resource Centers, stated for 35 years she has worked with families dealing with unplanned pregnancies by providing free pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, counseling, and support. She stated she has also worked with women and men who have come to regret their abortion. She showed an example of what a fetus looks like at 24 weeks. She stated she has a sister who was born at 24 weeks and has no medical complications from it. She stated the viability of the fetus has always been an issue regarding abortion. She stated it is very rare for a woman to discover she is pregnant past 24 weeks. She stated the RHA is based on rare and extreme cases. She stated usually abortions done between 20 and 24 weeks are done due to the fetus not being viable. She stated she has also seen women choose abortion for 24 week old health fetuses due to it being unwanted, unplanned, or they were being pressured. She stated with the RHA there will be an increase in the death of healthy, viable babies up to 9 months. She stated there is no more debate surrounding the humanity of the unborn, science has shown that there is life. She stated the debate has become about who has more rights between the parents or the child. She stated the RHA makes it so that the rights of the parents supersede the rights of the child. She stated the RHA was passed quickly and people did not have an opportunity to testify about it.

Ms. Foley questioned how the speakers have been chosen for this meeting.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated Ms. Foley is welcome to give her perspective on the topic. She stated she decides who to invite to speak, as Chair of the Committee.

Ms. Foley questioned if the speakers reflect Chairwoman Addonizio's views on the topic.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated they do.

Ms. Foley stated personal faith beliefs should not be part of this discussion due to separation of church and State. She expressed her opposition to the proposed resolution.

Pastor Andrew Columbia talked about the long term affects people deal with after making decisions surrounding abortion. He stated he has helped many people who have dealt with these repercussions.

Ms. Ramirez questioned what the role of Putnam County is in this matter.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated this resolution would be asking the Governor and State Legislature to repeal the RHA.

Ms. Colthirst stated according the State Health Laws, abortions are still subject to applicable laws governing healthcare. She stated there is no physician who will risk losing their license to abort a nine (9) month fetus. She stated there are ethical guidelines within the healthcare system and if necessary a case would go in front of an ethics committee.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated the RHA does not require a physician.

Legislative Counsel Firriolo stated the RHA no longer requires abortions after 20 weeks to take place in hospitals. He stated it essentially deregulates the process and would not require the ethical review that Ms. Colfers mentioned.

Legislator Nacerino stated when a woman is pregnant it is no longer only her body, there is another human life. She requested Chairwoman Addonizio read the proposed resolution into the record, which asks State officials to reconsider the RHA.

Ms. Baldwin stated the law has not changed regarding a baby being provided healthcare if it is born alive.

Legislative Counsel Firriolo disagreed and stated that part of the law was repealed.

Ms. Baldwin stated President Jimmy Carter, who was very religious, was against abortion so he legalized the availability of birth control to reduce the number of unwanted and unplanned pregnancies. She stated she believes this law is trying to do some of the same things. She stated only 1.3% of abortions take place after 24 weeks. She stated in many cases there is a medical reason that endangers the woman's life and in other cases it is determined late in the pregnancy that the fetus is not viable. She stated people do not have adequate access to birth control or early abortions. She stated the change brought by the RHA which no longer requires a second physician to be present makes early abortion available in areas where there are very limited resources available. She stated as far as the decriminalization, the law was written in a different time and culture, and now it will be handled by the health field.

Legislative Counsel Firriolo stated there used to be a requirement, for every abortion performed after 20 weeks, that a second physician is present to provide care in case the baby was born alive due to a failed abortion. He stated the prior law gave individual status that would provide protection to a fetus that was passed 20 weeks. He stated that all has now been repealed which means that if a baby is born alive due to a failed abortion it can be allowed to die.

Legislator Montgomery stated taking out the requirement of the second physician and allowing a healthcare practitioner to be present gives better access to abortions to people in rural areas. She stated there is very limited to reproductive healthcare in Putnam County.

Lynne Eckardt, Southeast resident, stated she respects women's right to choose. She disagreed with the accuracy of the proposed resolution, especially with the citation of Diana Greene Foster's research regarding reasons for late term abortions. She stated the reasons given in the research were raising children alone, conflict with the male partner which often included domestic abuse, depression with possibly using illicit substances, access problems, not coming to a decision early enough in the pregnancy, and age. She stated the resolution needs to be accurate if it is going to represent the people of Putnam County.

Legislator Montgomery stated the Constitution of New York defines a person as a person who is born alive and does not provide for provisions of a fetus. She stated before the RHA, New York was one (1) of only seven (7) states that criminalized patients and healthcare providers who managed abortions. She disagreed with the proposed resolution's speculation that the RHA would make abortions more common. She stated delaying access to an abortion makes it more dangerous. She stated trained licensed medical professionals who can now take part in the abortion process were not part of the old law because the positions did not exist. She stated in rural areas advanced care practitioners are sometimes the only primary point of medical access for people. She stated viability is not an identifiable moment, it is a spectrum. She stated the RHA leaves the decision of viability up to health care practitioners. She stated there is no medical consensus regarding pain for the fetus during abortions. She stated health practitioners are governed by many entities. She stated the RHA treats abortion like all other healthcare procedures. She stated any baby born alive is protected. She disagreed with many aspects of the proposed resolution. She stated every pregnancy is different and presents different risks to the mother, including death. She stated pregnancy is not a non-risk situation. She stated the reasons listed in the resolution for potential abortions are made to sound frivolous but they are not. She requested that the Legislature reconsiders approving this resolution. She stated the RHA removed the barriers for women seeking to get abortions in New York. She stated fewer than 10% of abortions occur at 14 weeks or later. She stated the RHA was done to codify the protections from the Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade.

Dave Hall, Putnam Valley resident, stated he is proud that we are able to express differing viewpoints in a peaceful manner. He stated he does not support the proposed resolution.

Legislator Nacerino stated she has a fundamentally different view from Legislator Montgomery's but is proud that everyone can express their viewpoints in a civil and diplomatic way.

A Putnam Valley resident stated there is no consensus among the residents attending this Committee Meeting. She stated she would like the Legislature to focus more on issues like more business and access to education.

Legislator Nacerino stated to use those in attendance as the barometer to vote would not be correct. She stated the Legislators, as elected officials, are entrusted to make decisions on their constituents' behalf. She stated if you are dissatisfied, your voice can be heard by voting.

Legislator Albano stated there is major pain and suffering during these procedures. He stated it is not the same as any other medical procedure. He stated he supports this resolution.

Legislator Castellano explained the process of how this resolution is in front of the Health Committee and, if passed, would be voted on at the next Full Legislative Meeting. He explained that in the meantime the Legislature will receive correspondence from constituents voicing their opinion on the matter. He encouraged everyone to send their opinions to the Legislature and their elected representatives.

Chairwoman Addonizio read the proposed resolution into the record.

Legislator Sullivan stated the resolution is very well-written and strongly conveys how the Legislature feels about the issue.

Chairwoman Addonizio made a motion to move Approval/Express Concerns Over and Seek Repeal of Provisions in the New York State Reproductive Health Act to the Full Legislative Meeting; Seconded by Legislator Sayegh. Legislator Gouldman abstains. Motion carries.

Legislator Montgomery requested clarification on the aspects of the resolution pertaining to the criminal penalties in the penal law. She stated the penalty for assault is much more than the penalty for abortion.

Legislative Counsel Firriolo stated this matter was well researched. He stated yes the penalty for assault is worse but under the old law, the assailant would be charged with both the assault and abortion.

Legislator Montgomery stated the old law would include women who had an abortion.

Legislative Counsel Firriolo stated the provision was a criminal charge against the assailant, not the woman.

Legislator Sayegh stated this is about limiting abortions.

Chairwoman Addonizio made a motion to waive the rules and accept the additional; Seconded by Legislator Sayegh. All in favor.

Item #5 - FYI/FDA Recalls Popular Blood Pressure Medications

Legislator Gouldman stated he requested that this be on the agenda because a constituent brought it to his attention and he wanted to raise awareness.

Legislator Castellano questioned what the obligation of the pharmacy is when a medication is recalled.

Legislator Gouldman stated he believes they make calls to people who take the medication.

Item #6 - Approval/Budgetary Amendment 19A024/Health Department/Septic System Repair Program/Oscawana Lake

Chairwoman Addonizio stated this has zero (0) fiscal impact.

Putnam Valley resident Tom Higgins requested more information.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated New York State Department of Health is funding a new septic system repair program. She stated the Putnam County Department of Health will be reviewing and approving the applications on a monthly basis.

Legislator Gouldman stated Mr. Higgins could provide his information to the Legislative Staff and they will look into his eligibility.

Legislator Nacerino questioned how the areas that can receive the aid are determined.

Legislative Counsel Firriolo stated he believes it is due to it being a public health issue involving public water. He stated the way the program works is that the homeowner spends the money and then they can receive up to 50% reimbursement.

Legislator Nacerino questioned why the Lake Oscawana region is eligible for this program, but not the Putnam Lake area.

Legislative Firriolo stated he is unsure of the exact reason but noted that there must be a justification in place for this program to exist for one area and not another.

Chairwoman Addonizio made a motion to move Budgetary Amendment 19A024 to the Audit & Administration Committee meeting; Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. All in favor.

Item #7 - Other Business

a. Discussion/Needle Littering Issue/Legislator Gouldman

Chairwoman Addonizio made a motion to waive the rules and accept the other business; Legislator Gouldman stated in Putnam Valley there have been instances of people finding used needles from drug users littered. He stated in order to help protect the community, safe disposal boxes for needles can be placed next to the medication drop off boxes.

Legislator Nacerino questioned how people using illegal drugs will be aware to bring their needles to these locations.

Legislator Gouldman stated the problem is people who pick up the litter do not know what to do with the needles.

Legislative Counsel Firriolo suggested reaching out to the Health Department to see what options are currently available for disposing of needles.

Chairwoman Addonizio made a motion to table this item; Seconded by Legislator Sayegh. All in favor.

Item #8 – Adjournment

There being no further business, at 10:27PM, Chairwoman Addonizio made a motion to adjourn: Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Ed Gordon.

Legalization of Marijuana Health, Safety and Social Implications

Presented by:
Kristin McConnell, M.S., CPP-G, Director
Prevention Council of Putnam



Agenda

- Prevalence of youth marijuana use
- History of the evolution of legalization of marijuana
- Health, safety and social implications
- Conclusions

<https://youtu.be/PxMLEZip7Uo>

Overview of the Problem - National

- Among 12th graders, around six (5.8) percent continue to report daily use of marijuana.
- Among all grades, perceptions of harm and disapproval of marijuana use have trended downward in recent years.
- Daily marijuana use continues to outpace daily cigarette use across grades.
- As with other vaping measures, marijuana vaping increased significantly from when it was first measured in 2017 to 2018.

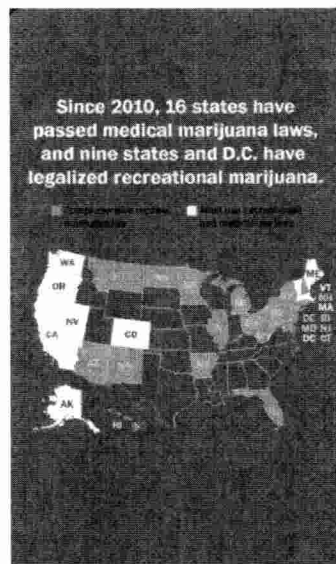
Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse, Monitoring the Future Survey, 2018

Overview of the Problem - Local

- Every two years in Putnam County, we administer the Prevention Needs Assessment (PNA) Survey to 8th, 10th and 12th grade students in all of the school districts. The survey asks youth about risk taking behaviors and inquires about the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.
- The survey results indicate that 34.9% of 12 graders in Putnam County reported using marijuana in the past 30 days, compared to 22.9% which is the national average.
- 54.2% of students reported they perceive marijuana to be harmful (this has significantly declined compared to baseline data from 2008 at 79.3%).

Source: Putnam County Prevention Needs Assessment Survey, 2018.

Evolution of Legalization Marijuana in the U.S.



The Lingo

- **CBD (cannabidiol)** – CBD is a compound typically found in very small quantities in the marijuana plant (and hemp plant), and it has been of interest to scientists and the public for several years due to its anti-seizure properties and other possible therapeutic benefits. CBD does not produce a “high”.
- **Medical Marijuana** – refers to using the whole, unprocessed marijuana plant or its basic extracts to treat symptoms of illness and other conditions. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not recognized or approved the marijuana plant as medicine. The FDA has approved some medicines derived from components of the marijuana plant.
- **Decriminalization of Marijuana** – when states lessen the penalties for possessing small amounts of marijuana but keep trafficking and possession of large amounts criminally illegal.
- **Recreational Marijuana** – used without medical justification and often contains higher levels of THC than medical marijuana. Recreational marijuana is associated with commercialization and a large profit motive (similar to “Big Tobacco”)

Implications of Legalization

Health Harms

- The amount of THC in marijuana has been increasing steadily over the past few decades. Today’s marijuana is not your “Woodstock weed”.
- In the 1960s and ‘70s, THC levels of the marijuana smoked averaged around 1%, compared to today’s marijuana potency of 80% or more.
- Higher THC levels may also mean a greater risk for addiction if people are regularly exposing themselves to high doses.
- The popularity of edibles (such as brownies, cookies or candy) also increases the chance of harmful reactions.

Source: Smart Approaches to Marijuana



Implications of Legalization

Addiction

- Marijuana is addictive and can produce withdrawal and dependence.
- Marijuana dependence is a diagnosis on the DSM-V.
- People currently in treatment or in recovery from opioid dependence admit marijuana led them to opioids.
- Marijuana can be a pathway to other drugs of abuse and more than doubles the risk of developing opioid use disorder or initiating non-medical prescription opioid use.

Source: Smart Approaches to Marijuana

Implications of Legalization

Crime and Public Safety

- The crime rate in Colorado has increased 11 times faster than the rest of the nation since legalization.
- In Colorado and Washington State, marijuana-impaired driving fatalities have more than doubled since legalization.
- Marijuana related traffic deaths in Colorado have increased 151% since 2012.
- Law enforcement does not have the resources to deal with the public safety issues associated with legalization.
- Banking systems are unavailable to the marijuana industry because of federal laws, creating a dangerous level of cash that can lead to robberies.
- Difficulties in establishing what is a legal marijuana operation have created problems in conducting investigations, determining probable cause and search and seizure procedures.
- Detecting driving under the influence of marijuana is a significant challenge for law enforcement (there is no chemical test that can be utilized).
- Drug-sniffing canines may have to be retrained or replaced.

Sources: Smart Approaches to Marijuana, National Police Foundation

Implications of Legalization

Illicit Market

- We have learned from other legalized states that drug cartels and the black market continue to function under legalization.
- Police report in Oregon revealed that at least 70% of marijuana sales in 2016 were on the black market and around three to five times the amount of marijuana consumed in Oregon leaves the state for illegal sales.
- Marijuana illegal trading through the black markets has not decreased, law enforcement agencies have found. Diversion across state boundaries has created issues for bordering states who do not have legalized marijuana laws.

Source: Smart Approaches to Marijuana, National Police Foundation

Implications of Legalization

Adolescent Brain

- Marijuana has effects on the adolescent brain and changes the pre-frontal cortex. THC over activates certain brain cell receptors which increases the risk for addiction.
- Regular marijuana use can reduce IQ by 8 points and is irreversible. It also impairs memory and learning.
- Use among adolescents in legalized states is higher. Colorado holds the top ranking for first time marijuana use among youth in the country. Currently, the marijuana use rate among Colorado teens is 50% above the national average.

Source: Smart Approaches to Marijuana

Implications of Legalization

Mental Health

- Marijuana turns on the COMT (catechol-methyl-transferase) gene that carries mental illness.
- Younger, more frequent use is strongly correlated with psychosis – hallucination, paranoia, anxiety, confusion.

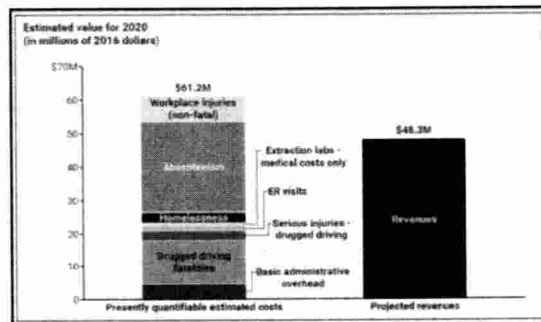
Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse

Implications of Legalization

Costs to Society

- Every \$1 received in tax revenue from our legal drugs costs society more than \$10 in lost social costs, due to workplace, highway, health, criminal justice, and other reasons.
- Marijuana legalization will increase public costs. In Colorado, for every \$1 earned from marijuana sales, it costs \$4.50 in treatment and law enforcement.
- Emergency department visits related to marijuana increased 35 percent and marijuana-related hospitalizations increased 72 percent after the legalization of recreational marijuana.

Sources: Smart Approaches to Marijuana and Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area



Conclusions

- Legalization of marijuana is a complex issue and there are many factors to consider.
- We need to slow down and consider the costs of such a policy.
- This will have a significant impact on the generation growing up now. Marijuana would be normalized, there would be increased access and availability, which leads them to believe it is safe – reducing the perception of risk of harm.
- Health and safety issue that should be driven by science not profit.

Questions

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