



Deerfield Valley
Community Partnership

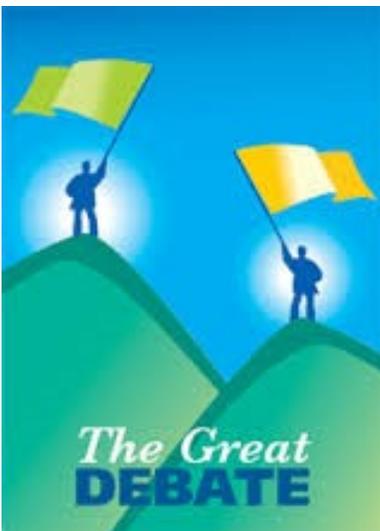
Working for a Healthier
Community

The Valley Prevention News

November 2015

Legalize Marijuana? Yes? Or No?

Vermonters Visit Colorado to Study Legalized Marijuana.



In our last issue we reported on the expected introduction of a bill that would legalize the sale, production and consumption of marijuana in Vermont. The bill never made it out of the Senate Judiciary Committee before the session was adjourned in May. The bill will likely be taken up in the upcoming legislative session. Vermont officials involved on both sides of the issue took a fact-finding trip to Colorado in February 2015. Participants included: Commissioner of VT Dept. of Public Safety; Chittenden County State’s Attorney; U.S. States’ Attorney, District of VT; Executive Director of Burlington Boys and Girls Club, Lobbyist for the Marijuana Policy Project; Executive Director of Maple Leaf Farm Treatment Center; Sheriff of Rutland County; and Chief of Police, Bennington. Their report, entitled *Vermonters Visit Colorado to Study Legalized Marijuana*, notes that, overall, the contingent were struck by the multitude of legalization issues to consider. The report includes an overview of the Colorado system, followed by a summary of certain challenging issues, which we will present here.

DID YOU KNOW?

1 in 6 teens who try marijuana will become addicted.

Marijuana use doubles the risk of a car accident.

Marijuana today is 3 times more potent than it was in the 1990’s and 5 times stronger than in the 1960’s.

Risk of psychosis & other medical illnesses increases by 6 times

In the 1970 Controlled Substances Act, Congress criminalized the cultivation and distribution of various drugs, including marijuana. In the 24 states that have adopted laws relaxing restrictions on cannabis, the states must adhere to eight federal priorities outlined in the Cole Memorandum when designing state marijuana regimes and regulations. Those addressed in the Vermont report include:

*** Restricting Distribution to Youth:** The 2015 report from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment titled, *Monitoring Health Concerns Related to Marijuana in Colorado 2014* presents evidence of “associations between adolescent and young adult marijuana use and at least short-term impairment of cognitive and academic abilities” as well as evidence that “adolescent marijuana users were less likely to graduate from high school and more likely to be addicted to marijuana, alcohol, and tobacco in adulthood.” The Coloradan officials and stakeholders interviewed by the Vermont visitors did not disagree with the health risks to youth but recognized that “the issue was how to inhibit and minimize teen marijuana use when adult recreational marijuana was legal.” Concern has been expressed over advertising and marketing directed to youth as well.

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Enforcement measures have been taken to comply with the Cole Memorandum, one of which ensured that no licensed marijuana dispensary be within 1000 feet of a school (56 had to relocate).

***Preventing the diversion of marijuana produced and distributed in Colorado, both legally and illegally, to other states:** In 2014 two neighboring states, Oklahoma and Nebraska, filed federal lawsuits against Colorado for legalizing marijuana due to the flow of marijuana into the two states. In response to this problem, Colorado has initiated a high-tech tracking system allowing every legally grown plant to be tracked through its growth cycle and sale. Notably, the legalization of marijuana in Colorado has not eliminated the illegal market and problems implicit in the loosely regulated medical marijuana industry. Law enforcement officials expressed concern that legalization of recreational marijuana in Colorado had attracted and expanded the black markets in both the cultivation and distribution of marijuana.

*** Preventing drugged driving and other adverse public health consequences associated with marijuana use:** This was a frequently discussed issue when speaking with law enforcement authorities. A complicating factor is that no known device exists for testing a driver's THC (the chemical that causes the psychological effects of marijuana) impairment. Another concern noted by the Vermont visitors is the "Edibles" issue. Edibles are THC infused snacks, cookies, and candy. Many Colorado state officials explained that they did not anticipate the challenges of overconsumption of edibles on the recreational market. Many recreational users are not educated about the effects of a given dosage and its form. Colorado has experienced an increase in hospitalizations and two overdose deaths (a suicide and a homicide) related to the overuse of marijuana. One of the difficulties with edibles is that THC candies and cookies can closely resemble non-THC candy and cookies, logically leading to accidental ingestions by children. An additional problem with edibles is that, in contrast to smoking marijuana or drinking alcohol, the intoxicating effects of eating THC products are delayed by an hour or more. Consequently, uninformed users waiting for rapid intoxication may impatiently eat multiple doses. Coloradans now require edibles to be marketed in single-doses in child-resistant containers with consumer information and warnings. Critics say that the new regulations are insufficient and that the printed warnings are so tiny that they are easily overlooked.



In January 2015, the Rand Corporation, a policy analyst, published another important report specific to the possible consequences of legalizing marijuana in Vermont. The report, entitled *Considering Marijuana Legalization-Insights for Vermont and other Jurisdictions*, was completed as the result of a legislative bill passed in May 2014 that required the Secretary of Administration's office to provide research on the consequences of legalization. The report does not make a recommendation about whether Vermont should change its marijuana laws, but it does research the follow questions, among others: How much marijuana is consumed in Vermont? How much does Vermont spend enforcing marijuana prohibition? What does the current scientific literature find about the consequences associated with marijuana consumption? How much does it cost to regulate legal marijuana? How many out-of-state users could Vermont end up supplying, either directly via marijuana tourism or indirectly?

The entire content of these two reports is available at dvcp.org/news.php.



Starting on Tuesday, December 1, 2015- join Dawn Borys and Jen Nilsen at the TVMHS Library for the Active Parenting for Teens Program. The six session program is designed to assist parents in helping their "Tweens and Teens" through the many challenges and choices they will make on the road to healthy adulthood. The meetings will run from 5:30pm-8:00pm. Parents who participate will receive \$10/class. Dinner & childcare will be provided.

For more information or to sign up, call 802-464-2202 or email: info@dvcp.org

Are you suffering from watching a loved one struggle with addiction?



Do you experience feelings of shame, guilt, worry, denial, anger, anxiety, or fear? Are you taking on the addict's responsibilities, making excuses for him/her, and trying to cover up for him/her? Obsessed with where they are, what they are doing, and how you might control their addiction?

Nar-Anon Family Groups are for those affected by someone else's addiction. The support group meetings help relatives and friends of the drug-abuser by finding others with the same feelings and problems, sharing experiences, making information available, and letting them know they are not alone.

For more information, please call Susan @ 802-345-4145

Nara-Non Family Group is every Monday night from 7:00-8:30pm at St. Mary's in the Mountain Church 95 East Main Wilmington

Members of the Twin Valley Middle High School Pride Group & Middle School Above the Influence Group encourage their peers to "Live Red"

Getting the message out: Respect Yourself-Be Drug Free!

Red Ribbon Week is an annual national campaign to raise awareness of the importance of the prevention work focusing on alcohol, and other drug use. The Red Ribbon Campaign started in 1985 in response to the torturing and murder of Drug Enforcement Agency Agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena. Community members and youth in communities across the country began wearing Red Ribbons as a symbol of their commitment to raise awareness of the destruction caused by drugs in America and to honor Kiki, who sacrificed his life trying to make a difference. Some of the activities that the students implemented at TVMHS included: Drug-free announcements, drug trivia, "Why I Choose to be Drug- Free" ribbon contest, Wear Red Day and the Live Red Campaign.

Deerfield Valley Community Partnership

Steering Committee & Program Staff:

- Carrie Blake
- Dawn Borys
- Bob Edwards
- Keli Gould
- Cindy Hayford
- Andy Hauty
- Dario Lussardi
- Karen Molina
- Jen Nilsen
- Arlene Palmiter
- Shelley Park
- Lynn Redd
- Rebecca Sweeney

Upcoming Coalition Meeting Dates

- January 11, 2016**
- February 15, 2016**
- March 21, 2016**

*Dinner is served at 5:30
Meeting Starts at 6:00
Join Us!
Everyone's Welcome*

*Please RSVP to:
info@dvcv.org
or 464-2202*



Deerfield Valley
Community Partnership
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Coordinator

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From the Coordinator's Desk...

As you can see in our article about the Vermonters' trip to Colorado, the delegation learned that there are a multitude of important issues relating to recreational marijuana legalization. Repeatedly those interviewed urged that Vermont take the time to collect all possible information about this issue before making a decision, and if legalization is favored, develop a comprehensive implementation plan.

As always, the main concern of DVCP is youth substance use. Calling the legalization of marijuana "Recreational use" implies that it is fun and harmless. If youth perceive the use of marijuana as harmless and fun, there is a higher likelihood of use. I believe that wording is important and would advocate that Vermont use the language "Adult marijuana use for 21 and older". This is clear language that the marijuana use is not intended for youth.

On another note, I hope you have noticed the increase in *Smoke Free Zones* around the Deerfield Valley. We would like to thank the town of Readsboro, the Town of Wilmington, Greene's Service station, DVTA- the MOOver, Pette Memorial Library, the Community Counseling Center, Mount Snow, Bartelby's, Wahoo's, and the Waffle House for partnering with DVCP to make our community a healthier place to live, reduce youth smoking and limit exposure to second-hand smoke. If you are interested in posting a smoke free sign, please call 802-2202 or email: info@dvcp.org.

-Cindy

If you are interested in attending a DVCP meeting, need information or have questions, please feel free to call me at 802-464-2202 or email me at chayford@myfairpoint.net

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