



*Working for a Healthier
Community*

The Valley Prevention News

December 2017

Update on Marijuana legalization *Researching the impact*

Governor's Marijuana Advisory Commission Education and Prevention Subcommittee Report

On November 14, 2017, the Education and Prevention Subcommittee presented a mandated report to the entire Marijuana Advisory Commission. The slide presentation of that report is available at http://marijuanacommission.vermont.gov/sites/mc/files/doc_library/2017_11_14_VDH_marijuana_advisory_presentation.pdf

A copy of the report is available at http://marijuanacommission.vermont.gov/sites/mc/files/doc_library/Health%20and%20Safety%20Endpoints%20Revised%2011_14_17%20%282%29.pdf including discussion of marijuana use and mental health (section iv), and specifically, early adolescent marijuana use.

DVCP is awaiting the presentation of the final report to Governor Scott and will publish its findings on our webpage www.dvcp.org, as well as on Facebook www.facebook.com/DeerfieldValleyCommunityPartnership/

According to the Marijuana Education Initiative, most teens today are growing up in an era of increasing legalization of marijuana for recreational purposes. They have not been properly informed about the differences between adolescent marijuana use and adult marijuana use, nor do they fully grasp the differences between recreational and medicinal use of the product. The still-developing adolescent brain differs significantly from the fully developed brain of an adult. The adolescent's brain, while in a critical state of development, is far more sensitive to the effects of marijuana.

Shifts in perception and mixed messaging have contributed to a breakdown in communication among adolescents and their parents and their educators. Youth are eager for information, but parents and teachers, many of whom were raised in the "Just Say No" era, do not know how or where to get the facts. Adding to the resulting breakdown in communication, parents who use marijuana recreationally fear looking like hypocrites in front of their teens, so they often avoid the conversation. In addition, marijuana does not have, in the minds of many teenagers and adults, the same reputation as drugs like opiates or cocaine, for example. It is also frequently regarded differently than tobacco which, while legal and still commonly used, is almost unequivocally recognized as having no health benefits. *

In 2004, the Vermont legislature legalized medical marijuana and established five dispensaries in the state. In 2017, Governor Phil Scott vetoed legislation that would approve recreational marijuana in May. Scott stated that he wanted answers to questions that he hoped a commission could answer. The Governor's Marijuana Commission will not debate whether or not the state should legalize marijuana. Rather, its concerns include the role of marijuana in highway accidents and fatalities, the impact on the developing brain, and at what age its effects are most impactful. By mid-January, the commission must present a report to the governor with recommendations on the appropriate way to test people for marijuana impairment, the possible funding and training for drug recognition experts, the need for youth prevention programs, and if the state has enough substance abuse facilities. **

Parts of this article are taken from the Marijuana Education Initiative (MEI). MEI was formed by two Colorado educators who saw the need for a progressive approach to youth marijuana prevention and intervention. MEI was created with one sole purpose: to Inform and Empower. MEI's goal is to put the most current, research-based information in the hands of parents, mentors, and educators and open the door to helping adolescents make informed decisions about marijuana. An informed youth is an empowered youth. For more information, visit: <https://marijuana-education.com/>

**Prevention Works VT*

***<http://www.vnews.com/Vermont-marijuana-commission-begins-legalization-study->*

Our Voices Xposed

Ten TVMHS students were recently recruited to take part in a select group of Vermont youth working to end the influence of flavored tobacco. The TVHS Our Voices Xposed (OVX) group is one of 18 in Vermont high schools this year.

The DVCP sponsored OVX team is comprised of students who are focused and creative, are comfortable meeting and interacting with others, and are passionate about making Vermont a healthier place. They are also able to balance schoolwork, OVX efforts, and extra-curricular activities. Successful candidates for the group were selected based on recommendations from fellow students and teachers. Our OVX members are Jordan Bolognani, Grace Russell, Grace Rizio, Casey Sibilia, Owen Grinold, Lucas Messing, Jack Kehoe, Janelle Fisher, Ally Taylor, and Rita Messing. The OVX group is sponsored by DVCP and is advised by DVCP staff, Shelley Park and Jen Nilsen.

OVX is focusing on CounterBalance, a campaign specifically geared to ending the influence of flavored tobacco products on Vermont's youth. Flavored cigarettes were banned in 2009. However, many flavored tobacco items still exist on the market, including e-cigarettes, vape, little cigars, hookah, and chew. These products are appealing, affordable, and addictive to youth. The Vermont Department of Health launched CounterBalance in 2014 with one overarching goal: to counter the tobacco industry's influence in the retail environment and



its impact on Vermont's youth.

A CounterBalance campaign trainer came to TVMHS for an informative session with our OVX team regarding the tobacco industry's targeting of certain sections of our society, including teens. The campaign is raising awareness of industry strategies used with flavored tobacco products.

In November, five of our OVX students attended the 1-day training and team-building OVX Summit at Lake Morey Resort. They attended workshops with other OVX students from around Vermont and practiced skills to implement the CounterBalance campaign at school and in our community. Workshops included presenting to different audiences, writing speeches, giving speeches, and peer critiques.



This past month, members provided information to students and parents at an OVX table at the Harlem Superstar game at TVMHS. In addition, they have started statewide store assessments to collect data on advertising, prices, as well as ranges and quantities of flavored tobacco items sold in every store selling tobacco in our communities. The assessments will be done statewide, and as the results are mapped, they will be made available on a statewide interactive map.

Our OVX group is looking forward to presenting information about flavored tobacco products locally to service organizations, parent groups, or interested groups. OVX advisor Shelley Park is most impressed with the members' interest in engaging adults through this type of work in our community. Interested organizations can contact Shelley at aspark802@gmail.com. For additional information visit <http://www.counterbalancevt.com/> and <http://facebook.com/CounterBalanceVT>

Local students promote Red Ribbon Week

Twin Valley Middle High School students recently observed Red Ribbon Week. Red Ribbon Week is an annual alcohol, and other drug prevention awareness campaign that takes place annually in October. The theme is year was **"Your Future is Key, so Stay Drug-Free."**

The Red Ribbon Campaign started in 1985 in response to the torturing and murder of DEA Agent "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 killing and destruction caused by drugs and to honor Kiki, for sacrificing his life trying to make a difference. Today, the Red Ribbon serves as a catalyst to mobilize communities to educate youth and encourage participation in drug prevention activities.



The High School Pride Group and the Middle School Above the Influence Group planned and implemented school-wide prevention activities throughout Red Ribbon Week, including tying red ribbons on cars; decorating the TVMHS front entrance with balloons, a red carpet and prevention messages; morning prevention announcements; and educational activities during lunch. Students were asked "What is your key to staying drug-free?". Responses were displayed on a bulletin board.



ATI Members left to right:



Steering Committee & Program Staff:

Carrie Blake
Dawn Borys
Courtney Burrows
Bob Edwards
Keli Gould
Cindy Hayford
Andy Hauty
Dario Lussardi
Karen Molina
Jen Nilsen
Shelley Park
Helena Queenie
Lynn Redd
Rebecca Sweeney

Upcoming Meetings:

January 15, 2018
February 26, 2018
March 19, 2018



Dinner is served at 5:30pm

Meeting 6:00-7:30pm

Everyone is Welcome

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



Ready to quit? Call 800-QUIT NOW

802Quits provides free support to quit tobacco. help and resources include nicotine replacement therapy, and phone, online, and in-person counseling.

www.802quits.org

Deerfield Valley
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From the Coordinator's Desk...

Deerfield Valley Community Partnership staff and coalition members are working hard on many issues of vital importance to our families and to our community. Nothing is more important to us than protecting our youth from the dangers of substance abuse and we can't do it alone.

We want to be sure that all segments of our community are represented at DVCP so I'm asking that you consider joining us in our efforts. If you decide to work with us, your commitment can range from joining the partnership as a member, volunteering to help with specific events and activities, helping us inform the community about issues, advocating for changes in policies and laws and/or helping us raise resources. If you have a connection to one or more community organization or a local business, your assistance in carrying our message back to those community members is invaluable.

Please note the list of upcoming DVCP meeting dates on page 3 and plan to attend one of our meetings. You'll meet friendly folks over a great catered dinner and get a feel for how we operate. No obligation. Just come and spend a couple of hours with us. We want to get to know you whether or not you decide to participate. Check out our website at: www.dvcp.org for more information.

If you are interested in attending, please contact me at 464-2202 or at chayford@myfairpoint.net.

Many good wishes for the holiday season and New Year. I look forward to seeing you at one (or more) of our meetings!

-Cindy

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