

Cannabis Takes page from Tobacco Playbook

Repeating a Public Health Crisis

Presentation Outline

- I. Objectives.
 - a. Relate how the cannabis industry is using similar marketing techniques as the tobacco industry in order to decrease perception of risk and increase youth use.
 - b. Recognize that current research shows that youth targeted cannabis advertising has a negative impact on pediatric health.
 - c. Realize that health policy that protects children from being targeted by cannabis advertising is actually several lacking or non-existent in several states.

- II. It's Medicine
 - a. 1940's to 1950's saw numerous tobacco advertisements depicting doctors smoking with unfounded medical claims about tobacco either being benign or good for one's health
 - b. In the late 1990's through the early 2000's many states began the process of legalizing recreational cannabis by first pushing for the legalization of medicinal use. Their advertisements are unlike any other prescription medication.

- III. Celebrity Endorsement
 - a. From the 1940's through the 1980's the tobacco industry featured well known film, TV and sports personas to endorse their products.
 - b. The 1980's also saw tobacco product placement in movies with target audiences both for adults and children.
 - c. Currently several recording artists as well as film/TV personae's either endorse or have their own line of commercially available cannabis products.
 - d. Minor league professional sports teams are allowing cannabis advertisements at their events with CBD advertisements/sponsorship allowed in MLB/NBA, although tobacco products are not allowed.

- IV. Utilize Youth Targeting Messaging
 - a. The tobacco industry has a long-standing tradition of targeting youth from early childhood with the use of cartoons to young adulthood with messaging about how tobacco is a rite of passage.
 - b. The cannabis industry had mimicked this approached verbatim but has included social media as powerful way to reach millions of young eyes.

V. Target Disadvantaged Communities

- a. The tobacco history as strategically targeted woman, people of color and the LGBTQ+ communities with their advertisements featuring debatable social justice messaging.
- b. The cannabis industry has invested heavily it is social justice platform, particularly with people of color. Promises of priority in obtaining dispensary licenses have not been actualized.

VI. What the Research shows on Cannabis Advertising

- a. The cannabis industry is projected to spend 4 billion in advertising in 2028
- b. Mounting research shows a correlation between exposure to cannabis advertising and increased likelihood of cannabis use/cannabis-use disorder/recall of cannabis messaging/decreased perception of risk of use.

VII. Cannabis Advertising Laws

- a. State restrictions vary widely.
- b. While many states generally prohibit targeting youth, many of the actual specific protections (use of cartoons/advertising near sensitive sites/warning labels/free give aways.) that are in place for tobacco advertising are lacking for cannabis advertising.