

Healthfsc Cautions the City of Richmond on Marijuana Equity Plan

Local cannabis legislation that increases the number of dispensaries can potentially influence cannabis initiation, frequency of use, abuse and disorder. Recreational cannabis can expose users to clinical substance use disorder (addiction). Ease of access to cannabis in Richmond will lead to ease of use and consequently, an abuse. Mental health issues will be common as well as driving related accidents, personal injuries, poisoning and inclination to other drug uses. As concerned health educators, we fear that the health of young teens will further be jeopardized by the presence of many cannabis dispensaries in their neighborhoods already saturated with liquor stores where teens can easily get alcohols and tobaccos. The number of liquor corner stores already in the neighborhoods should be considered in the implementation of the cannabis equity assessment.

With many low performing teens in schools, unprotected youth access to cannabis will exacerbate more youth health problems such as difficulty thinking, coordinating, and focusing in school, poor brain development, low educational and vocational outcomes, and poor social life. In other words, our youth will be exposed to more crisis and risk factors. Smoking cannabis, however, involves ingestion of noxious smoke, which produces potentially negative or undesirable sensations, and delivers known carcinogens into the body.

The City of Richmond should be concerned with the health and wellbeing of our young people than focusing on the profits that come from increase number of cannabis dispensaries. We recommend that the city invest in youth drug-use health education and work with the school district to educate teens on the dangers of marijuana, tobacco, and other drugs use before they initiate and become addicted.

This is the stand of our organization, Health for Schools and Communities Foundation (<https://healthfsc.org/>) which in collaboration with Breathe California (<https://www.lungsrus.org/tobacco-control/>) is working on tobacco control outreach and intervention in high-risk communities. The City of Richmond is one of the communities.

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Problem: This brief essay highlights scientifically based principles and risk factors that underlie substance use and addiction that can be leveraged to inform policies that might mitigate the development and consequences of cannabis use disorder.. However, there is increasing societal concern that these laws may impact the prevalence and severity of the potential adverse effects of cannabis use. A critical issue, and the focus of this essay, is how LCLs may affect the prevalence of one of these consequences, the development of cannabis use disorder (CUD) or “addiction”.

LCLs comprise multiple specific provisions that detail regulatory processes for determining how cannabis products can be created, distributed, and accessed. Some of these provisions have the potential to influence rates of cannabis initiation, frequency and quantity of use, and ultimately, progression to CUD.

Recreational cannabis potentially can expose users to clinical substance use disorder (addiction). They are attractive to user because they can be used as reinforcers because of the immediate experience it gives to users. uses cannabis (i.e., smoke, eat, vaporize) contributes to the magnitude of intoxication and subjective qualities of the experience. Smoking delivers THC to the central nervous system much more quickly than oral ingestion, leading to a more rapid onset of effects.