

Safety Committee Meeting - March 15, 2016

Mariah Sanderson, a member of the Vermont chapter of Safe Approaches to Marijuana, presented on the issues surrounding marijuana legalization. Mariah talked about "SAM Vermont". Smart Approaches to Marijuana. SAM has a Burlington Partnership for a Healthy Community.

What does legalization mean and why is it important in VT vs other states? It's important because VT has the 2nd highest prevalence of past 30 day marijuana use among 18 – 25 year olds. If Vermont already has a marijuana use problem, what will legalization do to our state?

Alcohol and tobacco use have been dropping in VT due in large part that a lot of time and money has been given for prevention. We have not put any money in to marijuana use prevention. There are four major factors that influence rates of use/abuse: Price, perception of risk, availability, and public attitude. Price will have the largest influence on youth.

Conversations and campaigns to legalize marijuana are influencing the perception that marijuana is not dangerous, which can have a devastating impact on youth and their lifelong health and development.

Legalization really means commercialization. There are no results as to what the long term impact will be. Marijuana is big business. Marijuana is put in many items such as drinks, candy, snacks and cookies.

Does it really matter if more people in VT will use marijuana? Yes. It's linked with addiction, heart and lung complications, mental illness, car crashes, poor quality of life outcomes, poor job performance, and poor academic results. 1 in 11 who uses marijuana will become addicted on it. Profits are made on addiction.

There is a financial cost to our state for the use of marijuana. Health consequences cost more than what the state will collect in marijuana sales. There will be an increased cost connected to healthcare, treatment, driving, and prevention. We need to put money into public education.

Lawmakers should seek advice from VT prevention, public health and law enforcement experts. There is a list of groups that are against the legalization of marijuana. To learn more about SAM, go to SAM-VT.ORG. Other websites to visit are: cdc.gov, drugabuse.gov, drugfree.org, monitoringthefuture.org, marijuanasienceforum.org, and themarijuanareport.org.

Susanne Gruending, Summit School principal, discussed her plans for an evacuation/relocation drill this spring.