



City of Long Beach

Working Together to Serve

Memorandum

Councilmember Suzie Price Third District

Date: January 17, 2017

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Suzie Price, Councilwoman, Third District *SP*
Rex Richardson, Vice Mayor, Ninth District *RR*
Lena Gonzalez, Councilwoman, First District *LG*
Al Austin, Councilmember, Eighth District *AA*

Subject: Education and outreach campaign regarding youth marijuana use and drug-impaired driving

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

1. Request the Health Department lead an effort to meet with various stakeholders, including but not limited to, the Board of Health and Human Services, marijuana business owners and collective representatives, City Council offices, educational institutions, such as LBUSD, LBCC and CSULB, the Office of Traffic Safety, and any other interested agency to develop an outreach and education campaign to educate (1) Long Beach youth on the consequences of youth marijuana use; (2) drivers regarding marijuana-impaired driving risks and consequences; (3) customers of the licensed marijuana dispensaries about the consequences and risk of re-selling or distributing medical marijuana to minors or other individuals; and (4) parents on the significant role they play in effectively teaching their kids about medical marijuana safety.
2. Request that the Business License Division work with the Health Department to develop best practices in terms of requiring an educational component for licensed marijuana dispensaries such as,
 - a. Creating a sticker that will be placed on the outside window of every legal marijuana dispensary letting the customer know that the dispensary is a licensed dispensary in the City of Long Beach, and therefore is in compliance with state and local rules/ordinances regarding marijuana sales, testing, advertising and education.
 - b. Require licensees to complete a training session/video or sign an advisement regarding the laws associated with selling marijuana to under-aged customers.

3. **Request the City Manager identify one-time, non-reoccurring funds to develop an initial education/outreach campaign including, but not limited to, development of a brochure, signage, or educational video that can be disseminated broadly to various groups as well as signage or videos that can be affixed/viewed by customers in marijuana dispensaries.**
4. **Request a report back from the City Manager on the above efforts in 6 months.**

BACKGROUND:

This past November, Long Beach voters passed into law Measure MM and Proposition 64. The use of medical marijuana has become increasingly common with patients suffering from a variety of diseases. Medical marijuana will now be accessible to patients who chose it as an alternative to traditional forms of medicine. Based on information received from other states that have implemented legal access to recreational and medical marijuana, there are several areas where public education and outreach could prevent or mitigate a multitude of public health and safety problems associated with broader access to marijuana.

YOUTH ACCESS AND USE OF MARIJUANA:

There is a broad body of science dedicated to the issue of the development of the adolescent brain and the impact on such development with early interaction of THC, the active component in marijuana. Adolescent use of marijuana has been linked to a range of developmental and social problems. A 2012 study of over 1,000 individuals followed from birth through midlife found that persistent cannabis use was associated with neuropsychological decline across numerous domains, including cognitive and memory problems and declining IQ. Further, cessation of marijuana use did NOT fully restore neuropsychological functioning among adolescent-onset cannabis users (Meier et al, 2012).

Most recently, a 2016 survey also showed that there continues to be a higher rate of marijuana use among 12th graders in states with medical marijuana laws compared to states without them. In 2016, 38.3 percent of high school seniors in states with medical marijuana laws reported past-year marijuana use compared to 33.3 percent in non-medical marijuana states. Previous studies have suggested that these differences precede enactment of medical marijuana laws. Additionally, this year, daily marijuana use exceeded cigarette use among 10th (2.5 vs. 1.9 percent) as well as 12th (6.0 vs. 4.8 percent) graders (*National Institute on Drug Abuse NIDA, 2016*). A link to the NIDA study can be found here: <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/teen-substance-use-shows-promising-decline>

In light of this research, the City of Long Beach should create a youth education campaign, designed to educate high school and college-aged youth about the consequences of using marijuana during their development years. This education could come in the form of an educational brochure, an educational video that can be

disseminated to large audiences of students, or assemblies similar to the "Every 15 minutes" program that is funded through the California Office of Traffic Safety. Staff should develop grant proposals related to outreach and education in order to help fund this endeavor. Staff should also work closely with the other local agencies and marijuana dispensary owners in the City of Long Beach to partner on the content, dissemination plan and on-going funding for such an outreach plan. There is great opportunity for collaboration on this issue, as everyone, regardless of their policy and/or financial interest believes that education and outreach for the youth is of beneficial value.

DRUG-IMPAIRED DRIVING:

Many people do not know that Colorado and other states that have implemented marijuana sales on a broad basis, have seen a significant and notable rise in Marijuana related, drug-impaired driving incident. Those who use marijuana, and other drugs, before getting behind the wheel are potentially putting themselves and others at risk of injury or death. Unfortunately, many people are unaware of the dangers of driving under the influence of marijuana.

Studies of college-aged drivers, for example, have shown that they perceive driving after marijuana use as more acceptable than driving after alcohol use, while also believing that the negative consequences of doing so are less than those for driving under the influence of alcohol. In reality, several studies have shown that drivers with THC in their blood, the main ingredient in marijuana, were approximately *twice* as likely to be responsible for a deadly crash, or to be killed themselves, than drivers who hadn't used drugs or alcohol.

While education campaigns have made the dangers of drunk driving, and more recently distracted-driving, a well-known fact, very little has been done to make drivers aware of the consequences of marijuana and other drug-impaired driving.

As with youth access, this is an area where policy makers and marijuana business owners can find a common ground and develop effective collaborations. In Colorado for example, marijuana dispensaries partnered with the Department of Transportation to place video games in the dispensaries. The video games provided an advisement to the player of the dangers of marijuana impaired driving. A video on the partnership can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQrz9FUHb5g>.

As the City works to develop a licensing, inspection and enforcement infrastructure for the re-integration of medical marijuana operations as requested by the voters, we have a rare opportunity to take a lead as a City that is committed to education and outreach, targeting some of the areas of concern with more broad marijuana access. And, unlike other policy considerations, this is an area where there is great opportunity for collaboration by those on either side of the issue. The City of Long Beach can serve as a model for the state, developing best practices that are developed through partnership and collaboration by all stakeholders.

Some of the attainable outreach and education practices could include, but should not be limited to:

- Development of a brochure(s) warning of youth access/use and drug-impaired driving;
- Labeling on products sold at dispensaries with warnings that could include language to the effect of:
 - o Adolescent use of marijuana can lead to a cognitive and developmental issues;
 - o Driving under the influence of marijuana is dangerous. If you drive under the influence of marijuana and someone is killed as a result of your conduct, you can be charged with manslaughter or murder.

These are only ideas designed to start the discussions. City staff is encouraged to work with other public and private entities, in developing the content of the educational and outreach resources.

PARENTAL INFLUENCE:

A comprehensive 2015 survey in Colorado looked at the health, well-being, and resiliency of young people in Colorado and found that where a trusted adult was present in a young person's life, the young person was less likely to engage in truant behavior. This study was conducted after the legalization of marijuana in Colorado and the findings should be taken into consideration when creating an educational program that encourages parents to get involved in educating their children on the effects of medical marijuana use. The study can be found here:

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/news/HKCS2015>.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The fiscal impact of developing a campaign and implementing it are unknown at this time. It is foreseeable that one-time, non-reoccurring funds can be used to fund the initial costs associated with developing an outreach campaign and dissemination plan. Beyond that, City staff should pursue grant opportunities and partnerships with relevant stakeholders (marijuana businesses, educational institutions, county agencies, etc.) to fund on-going advertisement and dissemination of the outreach concepts.