



Good Morning, and thank you for this opportunity to discuss my concerns regarding Senate Bill 261.

I have served in the prevention field for over 30 years, and got my start on the southside of Columbus serving local families. I currently work in Union County and represent a diverse coalition of 42 members.

Union County data shows a steady change in how students think about marijuana, with the onset of medical marijuana they believe marijuana to be safe.

Of the students who have used marijuana, most (75%) began that use under the age of 14.

Only 56% of students believe that smoking marijuana once or twice a week would be harmful. The lowest expression of risk for any of the drugs in that query.

As research has shown as perception of risk decreases use by teens increases.

Hence our concern regarding the changes to Senate Bill 261. In my viewpoint the changes are all geared towards increasing sales and profitability and take away many safeguards.

My worry of course is that we are putting corporate profits above the health and safety of our community. We are already seeing an increase in accidental use. Perhaps you heard about the gummies that were taken to an Upper Arlington Elementary school and made five children sick? In January a teen was taken to the ER from Marysville Highschool, they had vaped THC and had an adverse reaction. Incidents like these will increase and place a burden on our emergency departments.

Senate Bill 261- The “corrections bill for medical marijuana”

This bill hopes to decrease the cost of medical marijuana to consumers, expand cultivation space, reduce regulations and oversight.

Current cost for an ounce of marijuana is \$310. An ounce of marijuana according to the trade experts would generate about 60 joints or 100 bowls, making the cost per joint to be \$5

Most products seem to sell between \$15 and \$80 with lots of choices in the range of \$25 - \$35.

From a prevention stand point cost helps to limit

Many aspects of this bill are potentially harmful, but in the interest of time I will focus on a couple of key points.

- 1) Changing management from the State Pharmacy Board to the Commerce Department. Removes concern for patient safety and puts the focus more on building a new industry.
- 2) Also raises the concern of the creation of a new Marijuana Control Board at the same time these changes will expand the number of dispensaries and personal to the certified.
- 3) Removal of the conflict of interest clause which prohibits physicians from owning and recommending for a dispensary. This sets up opportunities where a physician could profit from finding individuals would benefit from a marijuana recommendation. A linkage that drove the opioid epidemic.
- 4) Increasing the potency of marijuana products from 70% to 90% THC levels. There is no evidence of greater efficacy at these high levels in fact as the THC content rises we see more negative impacts on mental health and functioning. No evidence of therapeutic benefit.
- 5) The ability to advertise on Social Media platforms- this is how Vape pens were promoted to teens and young adults. This feels like an effort to promote use directly to out teens. In Union County nicotine use has tripled among teens.
- 6) Increased number of dispensaries, and area under cultivation. One proponent testified that the change in cultivation space would take us from growing 65,000 lbs of flower to over 215, 000 lbs. This is huge increase in material and will increase competition for buyers.

I would remind the committee of the many adverse effects of marijuana especially on the teens and young adults

- ▶ Addiction- 9% of all users and 17% of those who use during adolescence
- ▶ Recent data shows that 25% of Union County patients with substance use disorder are addicted to cannabis
- ▶ Alters brain development causes decline in mental functioning and IQ scores
 - ▶ Decreased academic ability, cognitive function and attention
- ▶ Chronic bronchitis
- ▶ Depression and Anxiety

- ▶ Diminished lifetime achievement
- ▶ Motor vehicle crashes- Traffic fatalities where the driver tested positive for THC increased 138%
- ▶ Psychoses and exacerbation of schizophrenia
- ▶ Use of illicit drugs
- ▶ Suicide – 29% of individuals attempting suicide tested positive for THC in 2020 Colorado HIDA Report

Thank you for your time and attention to this issue. Don't sell the health and safety of Ohioans.

I am happy to take any questions

Nancy Beals