

Dear Legislators Grad and Sweaney,

As the House navigates the decision on the future of Bill S.241, I would like to share information that offers more insight into the issue.

Below I am pasting excerpts from two items. 1) VT Healthcare Innovation Project (VHCIP) quarterly report submitted to the House Committee on Health Care and Ways and Means and 2) VT Department of Health Marijuana Legalization Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

The VHCIP has been tasked with focusing on population health and reducing healthcare costs. The HIA has performed an extensive review of current literature to assess potential impacts of non-medical use of marijuana.

If Vermont has received funding and set goals to reduce risk for substance abuse and mental illness, the evidence shows that legalization and commercialization of marijuana has the potential to further complicate meeting these goals.

I find it very encouraging that there is already funding, infrastructure, and clear intentionality around supporting the health (physical and mental) of Vermonters. I also know the VT has received federal substance abuse prevention funds (through the Regional Prevention Partnerships Grant) to curb youth use rates of marijuana.

We do not need to legalize or regulate marijuana in order to tackle marijuana use and its harmful effects through prevention efforts.

The media continues to refer to "Prohibition" as not being effective. I do not consider Vermont to be in a state of prohibition in that we have the 2 most progressive laws, short of full legalization, in decriminalization and medical marijuana.

In summary, as you consider this important bill, please consider :

- 1) Vermont can (and has already begun to) address prevention and marijuana use and doesn't marijuana tax revenue to do so
- 2) Legalization has the potential to make less effective other Population Health and Prevention projects in our state, making waste of those federal dollars we are getting
- 3) Responsible adult marijuana use can be allowed and regulated through our existing decrim and medical marijuana laws. (Do they need review?)

Thank you for your consideration on this important matter.
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1) VHCIP - Project Summary: The Population Health Plan will build upon the existing State Health Improvement Plan, which identifies three strategic goals for population health improvement: Reduce the prevalence of chronic disease; reduce the prevalence of individuals with or at risk of substance abuse or mental illness; and improve childhood immunization rates. The Population Health Plan will also offer a strategic pathway forward to systematically connect integrated care management efforts with community-wide prevention strategies to improve population health outcomes. The plan will include an analysis of the care and payment models being tested through the VHCIP and offer suggestions for strategic levers to ensure population health improvement. It is being developed collaboratively by the SIM Population Health Work Group, Vermont Department of Health, and SIM staff, with support from contractors and key national subject matter experts. The Population Health Plan is a required deliverable of Vermont's SIM grant. Work to develop the Population Health Plan is ongoing; it will be completed by the end of Performance Period 3.

2) VDH – The HIA performed an extensive review of existing literature to identify strength of evidence associated with the potential health impacts of non-medical marijuana use. (full report found at : http://healthvermont.gov/pubs/healthassessments/documents/HIA_marijuana_regulation_in_vermont_execsumm_201601.pdf)