The views and opinions expressed during this lecture are those of the speaker and do not necessarily represent the views of UC CS.

Co-Sponsored by the Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program (TRDRP)

In light of the community concerns regarding COVID-19, this talk will be given as a webinar. The link will be provided on October 19th to those that have registered by 5:00 pm on Friday, October 16th at uccs.ucdavis.edu.

On November 8, 2016, California voters approved Proposition 64, which permits adults 21 years of age and over to possess and use marijuana for recreational purposes. The Proposition also created a complex regulatory structure and two new excise taxes (one on cultivation and one on retail sales). A legal marketplace for cannabis can theoretically decouple marijuana use from criminal activity, enhance safety, and promote public health. However, a large percentage of cannabis users in California continue to obtain cannabis from non-regulated sources. This UC CS Special Session brings together speakers from the UC Merced Center Nicotine and Cannabis Research Center, the office of state assembly member Kevin Cooley, and the office of Governor Gavin Newsom to discuss opportunities and barriers to creating a safe and functional legal marketplace for cannabis in California.

Dr. Anna Song is an Associate Professor of Health Psychology and Director of the UC Merced Nicotine and Cannabis Research Center. She received her BA in Political Science and Psychology at University of Michigan, Ann Arbor in 1998. She completed her PhD in Social-Personality Psychology at UC Davis in 2006, as well as a two-year post-doctoral fellowship at the Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education at UCSF, before joining the faculty at UC Merced in 2008 as an Assistant Professor. The overarching aim of her research program is to identify psychosocial mechanisms that explain the onset of risk behaviors, with a special emphasis on ethnic and socioeconomic differences in risk and health behavior prevalence and onset. Risk and health behaviors of interest include nicotine and marijuana use and weight loss behaviors. Much of her work involves longitudinal statistical modeling of large, epidemiological datasets and is often interdisciplinary. Her interests span from micro-level determinants (e.g., personality traits) to macro-level influences (e.g., culture and health policy). Dr. Song is the PI on a large center grant funded by California’s Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program that established the NCPC, which will focus on tobacco and marijuana policies and use in California’s Central Valley.

Dr. Mariaelena Gonzalez (Dr. G) is an Assistant Professor in Public Health at the University of California Merced in the fields of Social Epidemiology, Health Disparities, and Health Policy. Her current research focuses on cancer control, health disparities, including oral health disparities, and the ways in which social and environmental factors affect health risk behaviors. Dr. Gonzalez’s research areas includes cancer control, tobacco control, and understanding the unexpected risks and benefits of tobacco control policies, as well as the linkages between tobacco use and other risk behaviors. Dr. Gonzalez also studies the ways in which health behaviors, such as vaccinations and physician visits, differ between first, second, and third generation Latinos. Dr. Gonzalez’s previous research has examined scientific and medical occupational pipelines, the passage of smokefree laws in the United States, as well as the passage of smokefree laws in the Netherlands.

Ms. Amanda Kirchner has worked for the California State Assembly for thirteen years, serving five years in the Assembly Speaker’s Office of Member Services and eight years as Legislative Director for Assemblyman Ken Cooley, Chair of the Assembly Rules Committee. In 2015, Ms. Kirchner was tasked with staffing AB 266 (Cooley and Lackey) which created a regulatory framework for medicinal cannabis. By the end of that year, AB 266 had transformed into a three-bill package known as the Medical Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act. Ms. Kirchner’s areas of expertise include foster care, public safety, insurance, and cannabis. She has a B.A. from California State University, Stanislaus and a J.D. from University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law. Ms. Kirchner lives in Sacramento, is married, and has one son.

Ms. Nicole Elliott was appointed to serve as Governor Newsom’s senior cannabis advisor in February 2019. She is tasked with coordinating the work of numerous state agencies, communicating and collaborating with all impacted stakeholders, advocating for equity, advising the Governor on efficacy of current programming and developing additional policy reforms to strengthen and further develop the state’s cannabis framework. Prior to serving in this role, Nicole was appointed to serve as the first Director of the San Francisco Office of Cannabis in 2017. Responsible for overseeing the City and County’s development and implementation of a commercial cannabis regulatory framework, she facilitated the creation of San Francisco’s current cannabis policies - policies that focus on robust community engagement, successfully transitioning hundreds of local small cannabis businesses to the legal market, and prioritizing the development of an inclusive and diverse legal industry. Prior to her state service, Nicole spent ten years serving the City and County of San Francisco under the Newsom and Lee Administrations, working her way up from intern to serving in a variety of roles including Director of Appointments, Liaison to the Board of Supervisors, Director of State & Federal Affairs and Director of Legislative & Government Affairs.

For questions contact Brooke Miller Jacobs at (916) 445-5616 or bmillerjacob@ucdavis.edu

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