Cannabis Policy Research in the SJV

The UC Merced Nicotine and Cannabis Policy Center

Supported by the Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program Policy Center Award

Focused on tobacco and cannabis control policy in the San Joaquin Valley and Sierra Foothills

Two years of in-the-field observations and policy analysis

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Previous Models as Guides
Alcohol Control as a Model

Similarities
- Moderation
- Intoxication
- Potential health benefits
- Youth prevention

Dissimilarities
- Direct bystander effects
- Regulation of products (unlicensed production)
Tobacco Control as a Model

Similarities
- Mode of delivery
- Health consequences to user
- Secondhand and thirdhand smoke risk
- Youth prevention

Dissimilarities
- There is no safe dose of tobacco
- There is no medicinal use of tobacco
Conditions for a Healthy Cannabis Market

- Products are safe for consumption
- Products are accessible to those who want and need it
- Public and potential consumers can make a fully-informed decision
- Those who choose not to partake are protected
- Strong safeguards and policies to prevent youth use
1. Products are safe for consumption

- Strong licensing and regulation for products
  - Bureau of Cannabis Control oversight of licenses

- Public understanding of the role of licenses and regulation
  - Identification of licensed products

- Strategy to address unregulated market

- Example of weaknesses in strategy: EVALI outbreak
2. Products accessibility

Retailers Near Me

Search for a Location

No retailers found.

Try moving the map.
3. Fully-informed decision-making

Consumer has full knowledge about costs/benefits and has capacity to make decision

Youth prevention is critical:
- Brain development does not support informed decision-making process

The research on cannabis is mixed and complicated
- Very little research that addresses important questions:
  - What do Californians know?
  - What are the benefits? What are the risks?
- Critical to monitor benefit claims
- Very little information about secondhand risks
4. Protections for Non-users

- Secondhand and thirdhand smoke protection
- Multiunit housing
- Inclusion of cannabis in tobacco control policies
- Continued support for research on intoxication
5. Preventing Youth Use

Curbing marketing techniques geared towards youth
- Flavors
- Packaging

Brain development continues until mid-20’s
- Substance use interferes with brain development
- Pre-frontal cortex
Role of Research

Example of weaknesses in strategy: EVALI outbreak

Interaction of product composition

Effect of additives

Translation of research into policy

Consumer protection

Clean indoor air policies

Addiction support
How Healthy is our Market?