



Town of Darien

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Health Department

Big News! The Legislative Judicial Committee Has Voted to Legalize the Sale of Recreational Marijuana in Connecticut!

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While the bill approving the sale of recreational marijuana still has a way to go before being adopted, we should realize that, at some point in the not-too-distant future, recreational marijuana could very likely be available in Connecticut. To provide residents, and in particular parents, with meaningful information on this important topic, there will be a discussion about marijuana ***“What About Weed?” at the Darien Town Hall Auditorium on Wednesday, April 24th from 7 to 9 pm.*** Come to the meeting and hear experts discuss how marijuana affects teen brain development, what the long and short term health implications of marijuana use are and whether marijuana is addictive.

As Director of Health for the Town of Darien, I am a member of the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health (CADH), a nonprofit organization comprised of the Directors of Connecticut’s local health departments. Local health directors are the statutory agents of the Commissioner of Public Health and ensure the provision of essential public health services at the local level in Connecticut. CADH also provides testimony on bills pertaining to public health. The following is the CADH position statement and an excerpt of testimony submitted to the Legislature on the proposed legalization of recreational marijuana:

“While recognizing the potential financial benefits to the State from taxation revenue associated with this industry, the members of CADH oppose the retail sale of marijuana. As you are aware, Connecticut and the nation are struggling to make an impact in the opioid crisis. In 2018, over 1,000 of our residents lost their lives to overdoses. This number does not reflect the untold thousands that overdosed and survived to live with the disease of addiction. Local health departments have aggressively worked on this issue by collaborating with law enforcement officials, pre-hospital care partners, boards of education, prevention coalitions, elected officials, members of clergy, treatment facilities and countless other disciplines to try to turn the tide in the epidemic.”

While there is a debate about marijuana as a gateway drug, there is no debate that people of all ages, genders and socio-economic backgrounds are affected by the disease of addiction. Allowing the retail sale of marijuana may increase these addiction rates and amplify the current crisis. Our residents, communities and personnel are struggling to make an impact in the opioid crisis and adding retail sale of marijuana in our state will likely complicate those efforts. However, should the decision be made to approve the recreational sale of marijuana, adequate funding for addiction treatment and educational programs must be allocated from the tax revenue generated by the sale of marijuana and marijuana products.”

Co-sponsors of the event include Communities4Action, Community Fund of Darien, the Darien Depot, Darien Health Department, Liberation Programs, and YWCA Parent Awareness.

**To meet the challenges of the times, we all need to be informed – join us on April 24th !
Reservations are suggested: www.ywcadn.org/whataboutweed**