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coalitionnews

Prevention news and information from the Tiverton Prevention Coalition

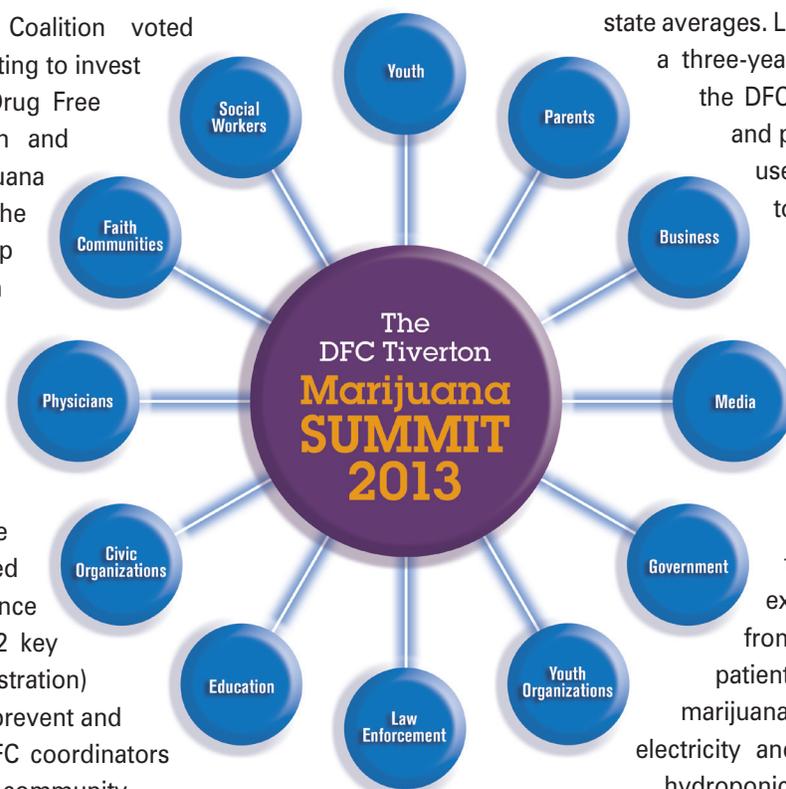
Coalition Planning “DFC Tiverton Marijuana Summit” for June

The Tiverton Prevention Coalition voted unanimously at its April meeting to invest monies from its five-year Drug Free Communities grant to plan and conduct a Tiverton Marijuana Summit in June. TPC hopes the summit will be the first step in developing a broad action plan that will prevent or reduce the negative impact that marijuana will continue to have on Tiverton unless we act now.

The summit is an example of the prevention model used by all DFC grantees. Evidence shows that engaging the 12 key community sectors (see illustration) is the most effective way to prevent and reduce substance abuse. DFC coordinators learn to implement this community-wide model through extensive training by Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America ([CADCA](#)).

“The summit is not a just-say-no event,” TPC coordinator Rebecca Elwell said. “We see the summit as community leaders coming together to consider how decriminalization, marijuana dispensaries, marijuana advertising and what the Rhode Island Supreme Court recently called the ‘poorly written’ Medical Marijuana Act will affect the Town’s health and safety. Then, we’ll brainstorm about what we can do proactively to protect the community, especially youth, from harm.”

Tiverton is already on the map of U.S. communities where the rate of youth marijuana use is higher than both national and



CADCA's prevention model has demonstrated that when all sectors of a community come together — social change happens.

state averages. Last year the Coalition received a three-year block grant, in addition to the DFC grant, to develop strategies and programs to reduce marijuana use among Tiverton teens. One tough obstacle to overcome is that according to the annual health survey administered at Tiverton High School, 56 percent of THS students do not perceive marijuana use as very risky or harmful.

The Coalition also says the risks go well beyond the youth population. For example, with a certificate from the Department of Health, patients and caregivers can grow marijuana indoors. Because of the electricity and water required for indoor hydroponic gardening, without regular safety and health inspections, the risk of fire and mold increase, putting landlords, tenants and neighbors at risk. Yet, neither the current marijuana law nor the Health Department regulations require such inspections. Further, the Health Department does not share information about “licensed growers,” which can make enforcement of marijuana possession laws difficult and put Tiverton police officers investigating complaints at greater risk.

Edith Borden, Coalition chair and a student assistance counselor, said, “I can see how marijuana is affecting the students I work with on a daily basis. However, the larger community is also being affected and it is important that we work together to develop ordinances and policies to reduce potential harm.”



Coalition members recently approved the following position statement on marijuana legislation in RI:

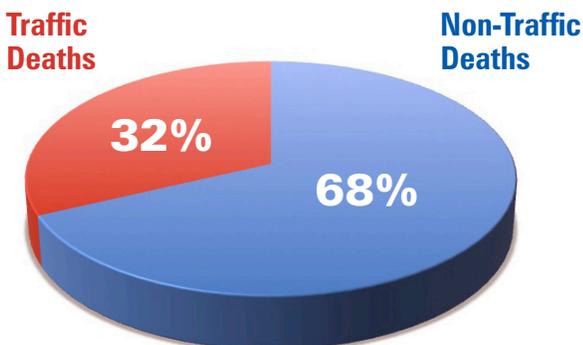
The Tiverton Prevention Coalition is opposed to any legislation that legalizes the recreational use of marijuana. Further, the Coalition seeks to ensure that "medical" marijuana is accessible only to those with debilitating diseases under the care and supervision of a licensed physician who adheres to standard medical practices.

This position will serve as a guide in the Coalition's efforts to take a proactive, sensible approach to marijuana legislation. The Coalition also urges local and state policy makers to proceed with caution in regard to changes in marijuana laws, carefully consider potential risks to health and safety, and build in strategies and funding to all marijuana legislation to protect youth from harm. rebecca@tivertonprevention.org

Around the Country: Dying Off-Road

Mothers Against Drunk Driving recently released a new analysis of fatalities related to underage drinking that shows that the two-thirds of all deaths associated with underage drinking do not happen on the roadways.

Homicides, suicides, alcohol poisonings, falls, drownings and burns — not traffic accidents — accounted for 68 percent of drinking-related fatalities for 15 to 20 year olds. The [CDC](#) also underscores many non-fatal consequences of underage drinking, including changes in brain development that may have life-long effects.



Source: M.A.D.D. RI

Parental influence is the most important factor in helping keep teens safe. For suggestions about talking to teens about drinking, check out MADD's [Seven Tips for Connecting with Your Teen](#). Taking away the keys doesn't take away 68 percent of the risks associated with underage drinking.

Practicing Prevention: 255 Tons?

While the most effective prevention begins at home, laws are also very effective tools in protecting communities from the harms of substance abuse. Recently, the RI Attorney General submitted to the Senate Judiciary committee amendments to state's Medical Marijuana Act, including one that limits the number of plants patients and caregivers are allowed to grow.

Currently, RI's Medical Marijuana Act allows patients and caregivers to grow 12 marijuana plants and 12 seedlings. Assuming a conservative three grow cycles per year multiplied by the 8,264 Rhode Islanders now "licensed" to grow marijuana, total yield could reach or exceed 255 tons of locally, home-grown marijuana a year, which does not include cannabis grown by dispensaries. Divide that "supply" by 4,849 registered patients and each would get 93 lbs. per year or about four ounces every day — clearly more than is needed by qualified patients. When supply far exceeds demand in one "market sector," it's likely that the excess "medical" marijuana will quickly find its way to the streets.

Review all the AG's [proposed amendments](#). Advocating for passage by contacting your representatives is also prevention you can practice at home

Note: Calculations based on [controlled study](#) on the yield of indoor hydroponic cannabis growing published by the National Institutes of Health.

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Comments? Questions? Interests?

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