

May 2013



coalition news

Prevention news and information from the Tiverton Prevention Coalition

Tiverton Marijuana Summit to Focus on “Unintended Consequences”

Sometimes, very good intentions can produce very troublesome outcomes. That’s the message the Tiverton Prevention Coalition is planning to deliver to town leaders at the Drug-Free Communities Tiverton Marijuana Summit on June 19.

“We’ve done the research,” said Coalition Coordinator Rebecca Elwell, “and we are calling the summit to present our findings to town leaders. State laws regarding marijuana are exposing Tiverton and other Rhode Island communities to new health and safety risks. They didn’t intend to and that’s why we refer to them as unintended consequences. To reduce those risks, we really do need a community that is aware and ready to take action together. My hope is that the summit will raise awareness and spark that action.”

Research shows that in states that have passed medical marijuana legislation, use of marijuana by youth increases, “which is not all that surprising,” Elwell said. “The adolescent brain is wired to take risks. Kids see the approval of marijuana for medical use and the decriminalization of marijuana as ‘proof’ that it can’t be ‘that risky.’ On the other hand, brain research now tells us that it is far more harmful for adolescents to smoke marijuana than we previously thought. It’s going to take a community to separate perception from the reality: parents, teachers, coaches, faith communities, youth workers — all delivering the same clear message.”

Safety is another issue to be addressed at the summit. The state’s Attorney General’s office recently called the “grow regulations” in the Medical Marijuana Act the Number One health and safety risk in Rhode Island. The key “culprit” is the requirement that marijuana must be grown indoors, no

doubt well-intentioned. Few people would tolerate a field of marijuana next to their home — or the crime problems it would likely cause!

“Most people don’t realize that a ‘grow house’ can be a bedroom in a tenement,” Elwell said. “We will talk about *indoor* hydroponic and soil gardening at the summit and review the very real safety, health and financial hazards that they pose for tenants, landlords and neighborhoods.”

Not knowing where these grow houses are compounds the problem, Elwell added. Currently, The Department of Health does not share that information with towns; “so we have no way

of inspecting grow operations to ensure they conform to local health, safety, community welfare issues and zoning ordinances.

“To reduce the impact of these unintended consequences, we can develop ordinances, regulations, policies and broad community education programs,” Elwell said. “We’re not powerless. We can take action. We hope the summit is the first step.”

LEGALIZATION



UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

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REBECCA'S notes

I am very much looking forward to the Marijuana Summit on June 19th. There is no stronger force than a group of concerned community members getting together to discuss issues that affect the health, safety, and well-being of their community. Add to the mix our local legislators and we have a powerful assembly, capable of influencing positive change.

Senator Lou DiPalma and Representative Jay Edwards have given their commitment to participate; Representative Canario has given tentative commitment based on a previous obligation at the State House. Police Chief Blakey, Superintendent William Rearick, School Committee Chairwoman Sally Black and Town Council member Joan Chabot have also agreed to participate.

[Looking forward to additional RSVPs!](#)

Practicing Prevention: Chapter 8!

In a bold move, Tiverton became the first RI community to ban possession, distribution and display of certain synthetic drugs including cannabinoids, cathinones and hallucinogens — often sold as incense, spice and bath salts.

[Chapter 8](#), a recent amendment to the Town's ordinances, said ingesting and inhaling these synthetic drugs "pose health, safety, and welfare issues to the residents of the Town of Tiverton."



The amendment made clear that it makes no difference whether these products are marked "not for human consumption" or whether they are displayed as tobacco, herbs, incense, spice, bath salts or plant food — they are now illegal in Tiverton. Selling, offering to sell them, giving them as a gift and possession are crimes punishable by up to one year imprisonment and/or up to a \$500 fine. For retailers, permits and licenses can be permanently revoked.

Special kudos go to Chief Tom Blakey for proposing Chapter 8 and to the Town Council for passing this important "prevention ordinance."

Around the Country: Bad Energy

From Jan. 1 through April 30, 2013, [poison centers](#) across America reported 1,060 cases related to energy drinks; 664 were children 18 and younger.



The problem will likely get worse. Energy drinks are now consumed by 30% to 50% of adolescents and young adults, [Pediatrics](#)® journal reported. These drinks often contain high and unregulated amounts of caffeine and have been linked to serious adverse effects, especially among young people, including delirium, seizures, several heart-related problems, mood changes and dehydration. The [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) recently warned pediatricians to urge their patients not to use these products. Of note, San Francisco's public attorney recently [filed a lawsuit against Monster Beverage](#), over concerns that the company is targeting its potentially dangerous products to children as young as six years old in its advertising campaigns.

The federal government is also weighing in. After releasing an investigation into the marketing practices of energy drink companies, Massachusetts Representative Edward Markey said, "It's time for energy drink makers to stop masking their ingredients, stop marketing to kids, and start being more transparent with their products. It's time for the FDA to crack down on these drink makers."

If your kids or their friends are using energy drinks, even only occasionally, it's time to tell them they're bad energy.

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Comments? Questions? Interests?
Get in touch with Rebecca at 401-835-5311 or Rebecca@tivertonprevention.org
www.TivertonPrevention.org

