
Preventing Substance Misuse & Supporting Healthy Communities

*Considerations for retail sales of cannabis in the Town
of Essex*

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Presenters

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Personal disclosures:

- *Village resident. Two teenagers at EHS*
- *Steering Committee Member, Smart Approaches to Marijuana VT*

Topics

- Act 164 overview and municipal authority
- What is cannabis and marijuana and what does it look like today?
- *A few data points*
- Risk and protective factors for substance use
- Municipal strategies to reduce youth use
- Resources

Act 164 Summarized

- ❖ Legalizes sale / purchase / taxation of adult use cannabis with regulation (establishes a retail market)
- ❖ Creates an independent commission within the executive branch – the Cannabis Control Board – to regulate and license adult-use cannabis business in VT
- ❖ Retail sale may begin October 2022
- ❖ Minimum purchase and possession age is 21
- ❖ Public consumption is not allowed
- ❖ 30% THC limit for Cannabis flower, 60% limit for concentrates
- ❖ All sales (6%) and excise tax (14%) sent to the State - 30% of revenue allocated to afterschool and prevention initiatives for youth
- ❖ Towns can vote to “Opt In” the retail sale of recreational cannabis
 - ❖ Establish a Cannabis Control Board for licensing
 - ❖ Municipalities cannot issue blanket prohibitions of cannabis establishments via ordinance or zoning - however, the uses are subject to zoning.
 - ❖ Cannabis shall not be regulated as “farming,” and cultivated cannabis shall not be considered an agricultural product or agricultural crop under relevant State laws;
- ❖ Cultivation, testing, warehousing, and distribution are not subject to any municipal opt-in.

Act 164 Timeline

- March 1, 2022: Final adoption of rules for cannabis establishments, medical program, and dispensaries. **RULEMAKING IS NOT FINAL!**
- On or before May 1, 2022: Begin issuing licenses for small cultivators, integrated licensees, and testing labs; and **Integrated licensees may begin selling cannabis and cannabis products to the public in those towns that have opted in.**
- On or before Oct. 1, 2022: Begin issuing licenses for retailers; and **retailers may begin selling cannabis and cannabis products to the public in those towns that have opted in.**

Should the town schedule a vote on whether to opt into retail cannabis?

- ❖ Survey residents prior to a vote.
- ❖ Does the town need to hold informational sessions prior to an opt in vote?
 - ❖ Tourism
 - ❖ Taxation
 - ❖ Health and youth
 - ❖ Safety
- ❖ How important is it that the town receive tax revenue from retail cannabis sales?
- ❖ Which topics do you want more information about? (public safety, cannabis and health, cannabis use and youth, tourism, details of cannabis law, town regulations to limit youth exposure to cannabis, Act 164 tax revenue structure)
- ❖ Cannabis Research Committee
 - ❖ Include health, safety, and prevention representation

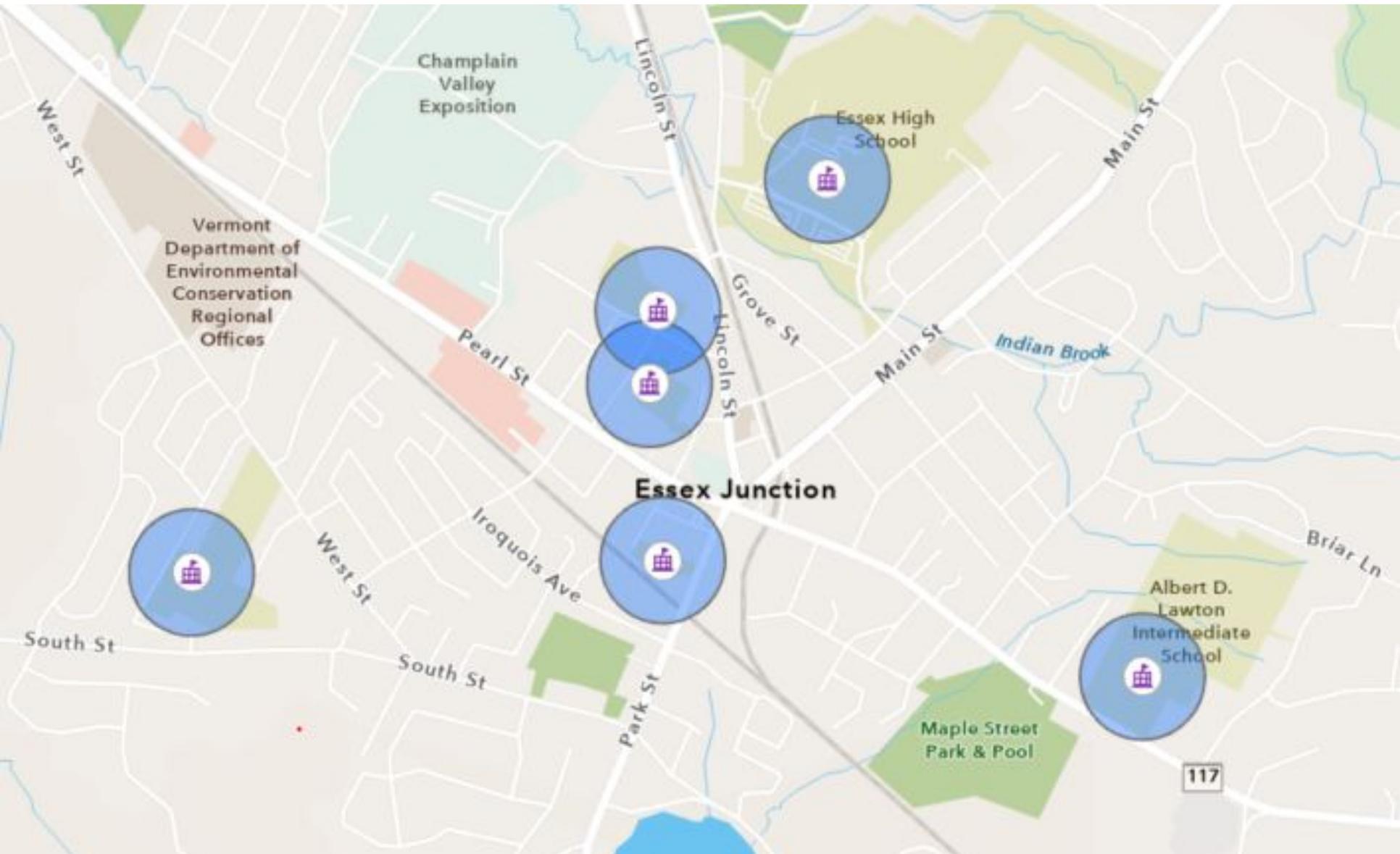
If you choose to hold a vote.....

- ❖ There is no deadline for voting, the Town may choose not to hold a vote.
- ❖ Prior to a cannabis retailer operating within a municipality, the municipality shall affirmatively permit the operation of such cannabis establishments by majority vote of those present OR voting by Australian ballot at an annual or special meeting warned for that purpose. A municipality may place retailers or integrated licensees, or both, on the ballot for approval.
- ❖ The question can be put on the ballot by the Selectboard or via the standard resident's 5% signature collection process
- ❖ If opt-in is the favorable choice, then work to establish local regulations **in alignment with state rule making** (e.g. zoning, Local Cannabis Commission) depending on resident wishes.

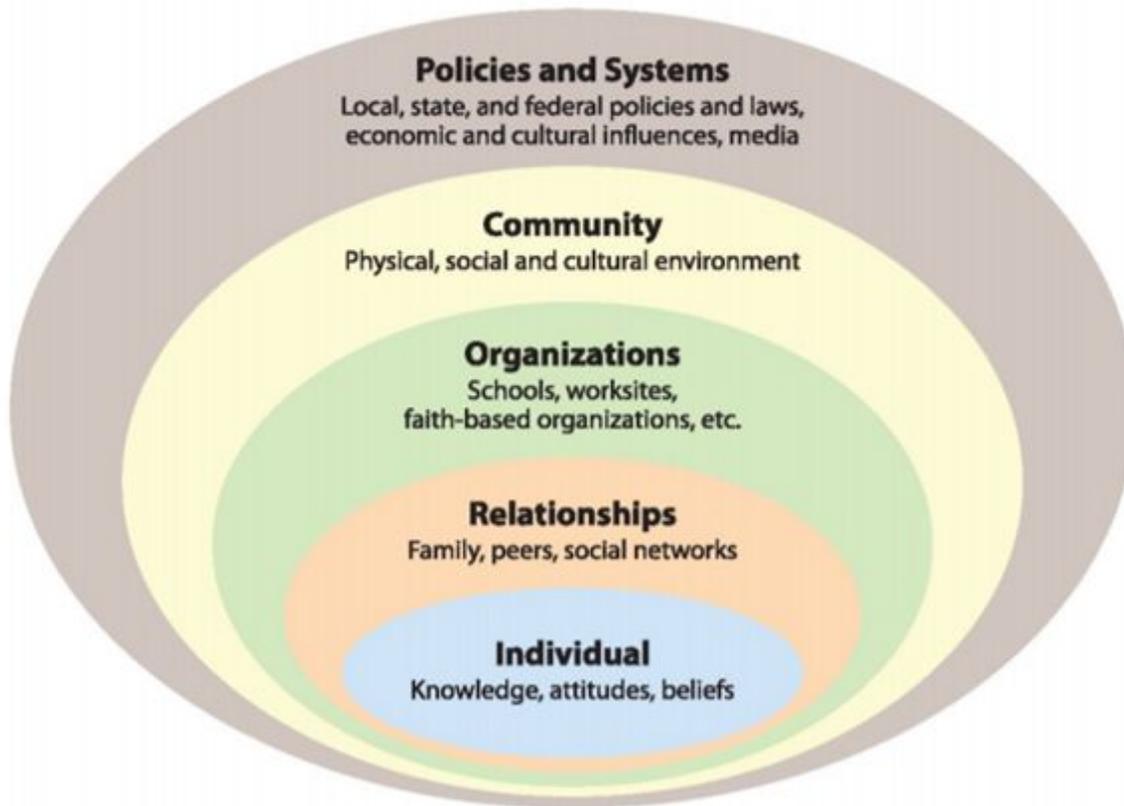
If opting in, next steps:

- ❖ Establish a local cannabis control commission
- ❖ Consider strengthening or expanding regulations in alignment with rule making
 - ❖ Density rules
 - ❖ Buffer zones
 - ❖ Content neutral sign regulations
 - ❖ Zoning, Licensing, and Ordinance

Buffer Zones around Schools- 500 ft.



VERMONT PREVENTION MODEL



In order to effectively prevent substance misuse, communities must engage in strategies at all levels. **The strategies that have the greatest impact are improvements to policies and systems.**

Principles of Health in the Built Environment

Heart & Soul Describes Safety

Heart & Soul participants described the Safety value in the following ways:

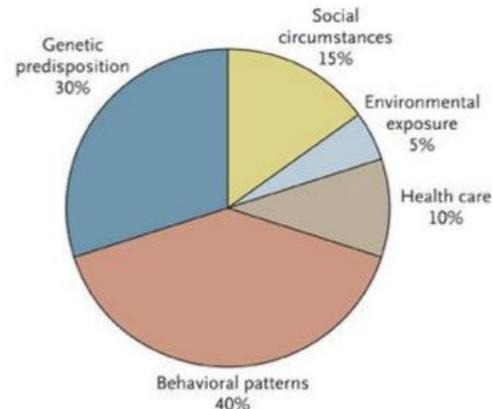
- The presence of physical infrastructure that supports safety, including sidewalks, bike lanes, street lighting and cameras;
- A robust first responder system (police, fire and rescue) and a police department that is engaged, active, visible, and strong;
- Education and activities that help all of us know how to be safe, smart and make healthy choices;
- A connected community where neighbors know, care and watch out for each other;
- Substance abuse education, prevention and services;
- Activities and support for our youth and young adults; and

*“Heart & Soul identified health and Recreation as one of the core values for the Town of Essex.”
(2016 Essex Town Plan)*

“Youth are impacted by messages they receive in the community. These messages come in the form of advertising, the presence of alcohol/tobacco at community events, or the number of locations 2019 Essex Junction that sell products intended for adult (21+) use. It is essential to consider strategies in the built environment to ensure that substance use prevention is the norm.” (Essex Junction Comp plan page 48)

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A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE
FOR CHITTENDEN COUNTY



- What Contributes to health?
- Healthy Community Design
- Healthy Equity



Integrate substance use prevention into our culture by working with Essex CHIPS and the school district to ensure youth are receiving healthy messages where they live, learn, and play.

Why Essex Should Care About Prevention

Municipalities and residents have been given a great responsibility to set public health policy.

Policy affects everyone in a community, regardless of individual opinions and viewpoints and can have long and lasting implications a community. This decision should not be taken lightly.



Marijuana and Cannabis: What's the Difference?

“**Cannabis**” refers to all products derived from the Cannabis plant.

“**Marijuana**” refers to parts of or products from the plant (usually the leaves and flowers) that contain substantial amounts of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the psychoactive component of the plant that can make people intoxicated.

“Marijuana” is more recently being replaced with “cannabis with THC” because of a racially charged history connected to the use of the word marijuana.

Important Note: In Act 164 (the new law that will allow for commercial sales of cannabis in VT), the legislature mandated that “Marijuana” be changed to “Cannabis” in all laws. For this purpose, the term cannabis refers to the drug, including anything containing more than .03% THC (products with .03% or less THC are labeled as Hemp).



What does CBD have to do with it?

CBD stands for cannabidiol. It is the second most prevalent of the active components in cannabis. CBD is generally derived from the hemp plant, a cousin of the cannabis with THC plant. By itself, CBD does not cause a “high” like THC. You may have seen products with CBD already in VT stores. They are allowed to be sold if they contain less than .03% of active THC.

CBD can also help to moderate the effects of THC.

Important Note: Currently, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not regulate the safety and purity of CBD. So you cannot know for sure that the product you buy has active ingredients at the dose listed on the label.*

**There have been a [number of studies that tested common CBD products](#) and found either THC or other unsafe ingredients in them.*



9 OUT OF 10

**PEOPLE WITH SUBSTANCE
PROBLEMS STARTED USING
BY AGE 18**

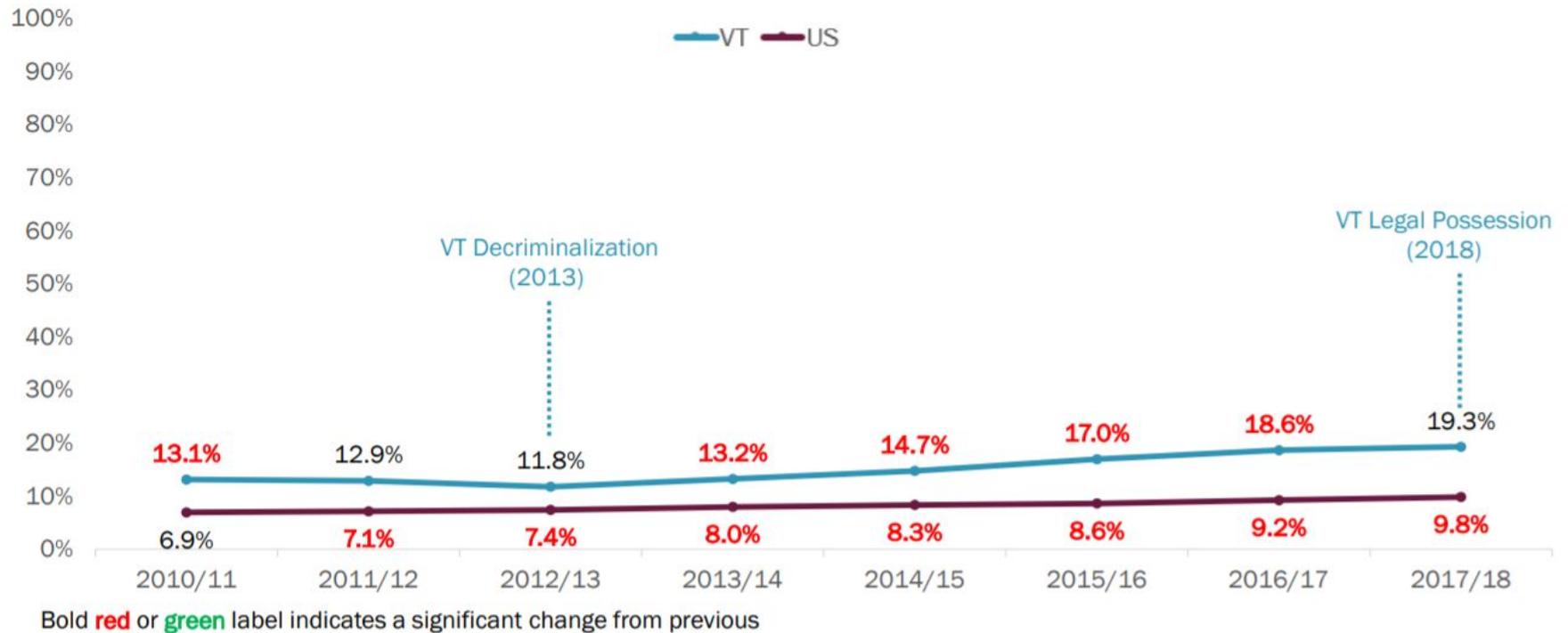
Suggested goal for
Essex:

Delay the age of first use,
whether alcohol, tobacco or
marijuana—the most commonly
used substances among teens—
until the brain has fully
matured.

**Make the healthy choice, the easy choice
- for everyone!**

CASAColumbia. (2011). Adolescent substance use: America's #1 public health problem.

The percentage of Vermonters age 12+ using marijuana in the past month is consistently higher than the national average. Vermont and US have both had significant increases in use.

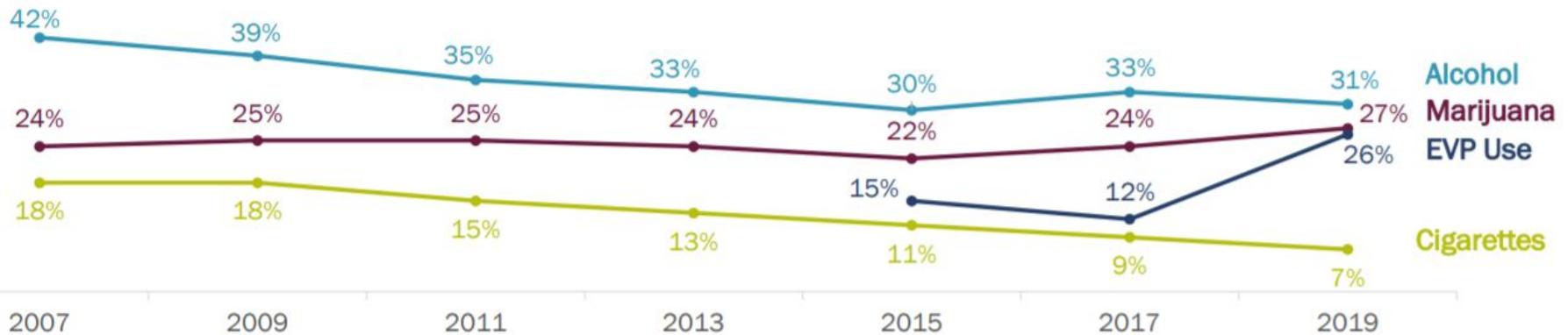


Vermont Department of Health

Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2010-2018 3

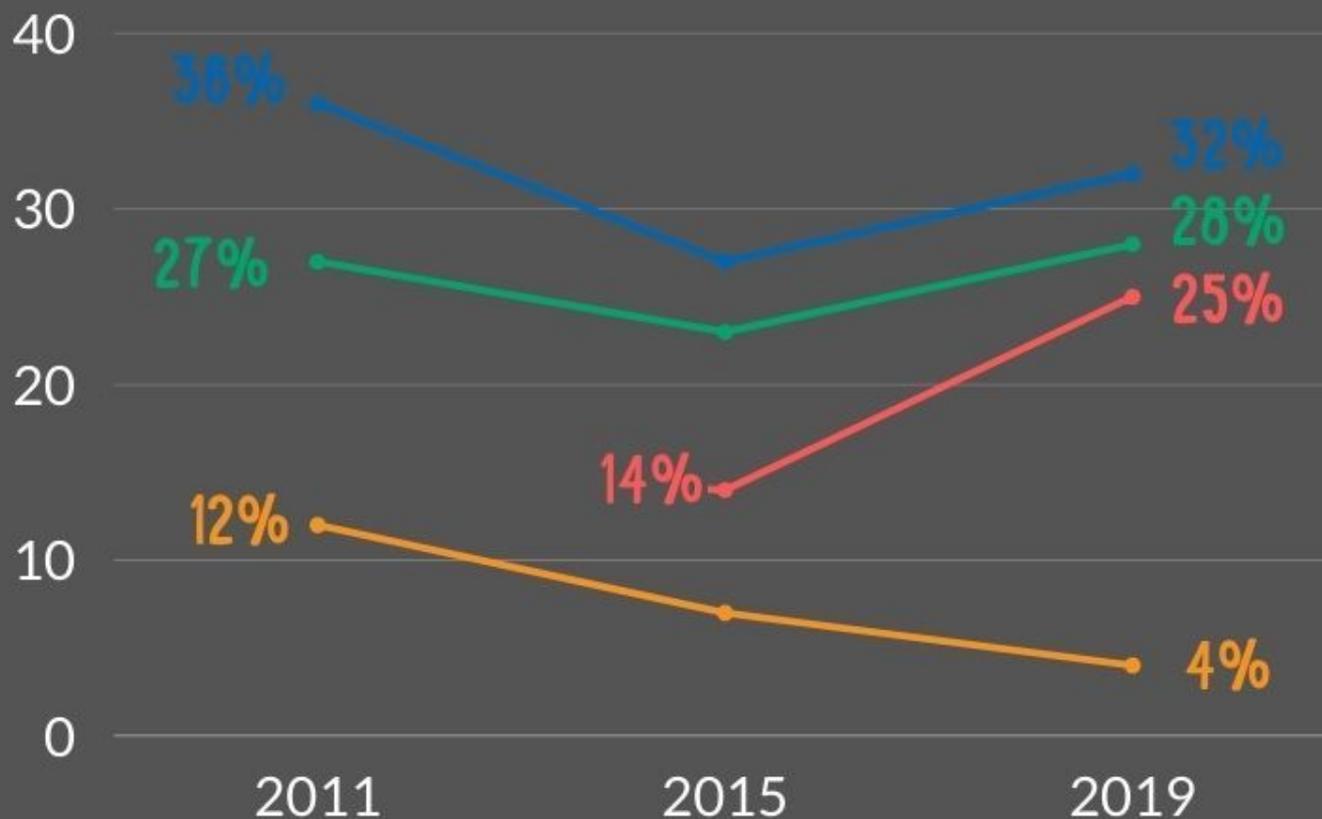
Slide taken from VDH 2020 presentation to the VT legislature on the "Health Impacts of Legalization."

In 2019, more than one quarter of Vermont high school students used marijuana in the past 30 days. Electronic vapor product use more than doubled between 2017 and 2019.



ESSEX HIGH SCHOOL YRBS DATA

Reported Use in Past 30 Days



Alcohol use

Marijuana Use

E-Tobacco

Cigarette Use

**What does today's
cannabis with THC (marijuana)
look like?**



Buds

Hash



Resin



Wax



Kief



Budder

Oil (Butane, CO2)

Tincture

Shatter



Commercialized Cannabis with THC products for sale in Washington in 2020. From left to right: oil capsules, peach ring gummies, chocolate chip cookie dough, orange cream soda, sugar packets, chocolate covered malted milk ball, jalapeno ranch pretzels and rainbow belt gummies.

Commercialized THC products from Colorado

Clockwise from top left:
e-cigarette with THC,
THC-sprayed gummy bear,
THC-infused brownie, 73%
THC shatter, THC-infused
breath mints, THC powder,
74% THC hash oil syringe,
22% THC bud.



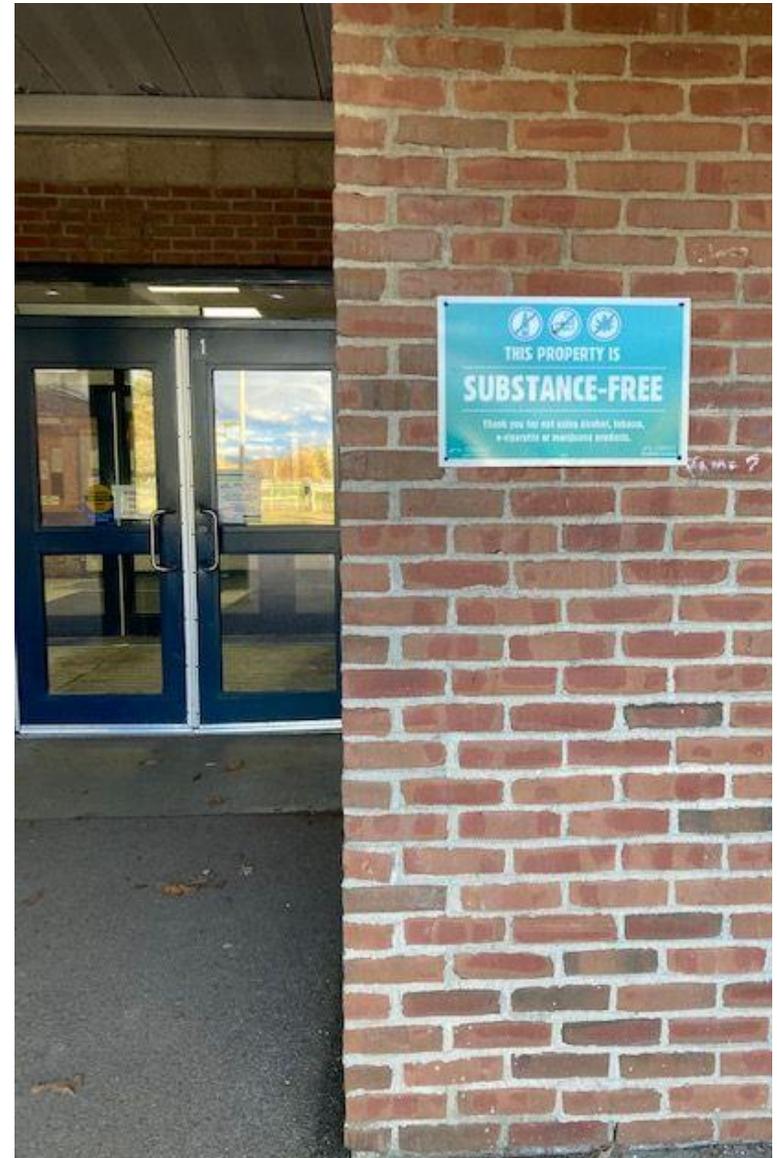
Clockwise from left:
THC inhaler, THC-infused sexual
lubricant, THC-infused mouth spray,
THC-infused suppository.



Risk Factor: community norms are unclear or encourage use



Protective Factor: Policies and norms encourage non-use



What is the impact of exposure to cannabis advertising?

A little of the relevant research:



- **Exposure to marijuana advertisements was associated with higher odds of current marijuana use among adolescents.** From National Monitoring the Future Survey of 12-17 yr olds (n=12,988) **CONCLUSION:** “Regulations that limit marijuana advertisements to adolescents and educational campaigns on harmfulness of illicit marijuana use are needed.”
-https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2017/17_0253.htm
- **Cannabis ads and store location influence youth marijuana use.** Survey of 13-17 yr olds in WA (n=350). **“Regular exposure to marijuana advertising on storefronts, billboards, retailer websites and other locations increased the likelihood of adolescents using marijuana.”**

-*Youth's Proximity to Marijuana Retailers and Advertisements: Factors Associated with Washington State Adolescents' Intentions to Use Marijuana. Journal of Health Communication, 2020*

Community-Level Prevention

Root Causes of Youth Substance Misuse

- Community normalization
- Access and availability
- Substances in the community
- Low perception of harm by adults and youth
- Early onset of youth substance misuse

Strategies to Prevent Youth Initiation and Use

- Create buffer for adult-only product sales near schools and other places kids gather
- Establish density maximums (“no more than 1 license per block”)
- Prohibit use in public and at family-friendly events (alcohol, cannabis, tobacco)
- Prohibit any adult-only advertising (content neutral) in locations accessed by kids and/or Limit/Eliminate Window/Sidewalk/Street view advertisements
- Require clear warnings and disclosures on labels and at stores – including information about the health risks of use
- Local options tax- youth are highly influenced by price
- Collect data to help monitor and respond to impacts on kids and increases in use rates

Other evidence-informed practice to support community public health

- Include specific public health commitments in town plan
- Include public health and prevention representation on steering committees for zoning and regulation discussions.
- Develop a health and wellness committee on selectboards.

There is a lot of helpful research and resources on this topic:

RESOURCES

- [Prioritizing Health in the Built Environment: A municipal planning look at Preventing Substance Use in Chittenden County - Chittenden Prevention Network](#)
- [Healthy Lamoille Valley Community Planning Toolkit](#)
- Vermont League of Cities & Towns | [Vermont Municipal Regulation of Alcohol and Tobacco and Alcohol and Tobacco Advertising »](#)
- [Marijuana Legalization Health Impact Assessment](#) - Data-driven examination of the health impact of marijuana legalization on VT.
- [Getting it Right from the Start-](#) Advancing Public Health & Equity in Cannabis Policy

CONTACT

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