

CANNABIS IN CT

A CALL TO ACTION

WHY CANNABIS PREVENTION MATTERS

- The average past-month cannabis use in Connecticut is **higher than the national average**, with the highest prevalence among young adults (18–25) (NSDUH, 2022).
- Cannabis is the second most used substance across all age groups, behind alcohol (CT BRFSS, 2023).
- CT Poison Control Center averages 40–60 calls monthly for children under 17 who have ingested or inhaled cannabis (News12, 2025).
- Marijuana-related suspensions and incidents in Connecticut public schools have increased significantly (CSDE, 2023).
- **Cannabis-related emergency department visits are up 200%** due to accidental ingestion and cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome (DPH, 2024).

Access & Use Trends

- From January 2024 to present, the number of licensed dispensaries in Connecticut increased from **12 to 19**.
- 36.2% of high school students reported that obtaining marijuana is **not “very hard/sort of hard.”**
- **1 in 5 adults admitted to driving under the influence of cannabis**, with the highest rates among males (24.3%) and excessive alcohol drinkers (29%).

Youth Perceptions & Use

- Cannabis **ranks lowest in perception of risk/harm among youth** (Grades 6–12), compared to other substances.
- Among past-month cannabis users, 1 in 6 reported they had contemplated quitting but were unsuccessful.
- Vaping cannabis is a major concern; **40% of individuals aged 12+ who reported vaping in the past month also vaped cannabis.**

High THC Potency & Product Packaging

- Modern cannabis products contain significantly higher THC levels, with concentrates reaching up to 99% THC.
- Connecticut’s RERACA Law caps THC potency at 30% for plant material, 60% for concentrates, and 5mg per edible serving, but vapes are not included in this restriction.
- Edibles are frequently packaged to resemble common snacks (e.g., Skittles, Cheetos), making them attractive and dangerous to children.

Policy Recommendations & Prevention Strategies

Strengthen Regulations on Cannabis Sales & Use

- Expand restrictions on cannabis **vape potency** to fall under existing THC caps.
- Implement stricter packaging and labeling requirements to prevent accidental consumption and ensure clear dosage guidance.
- Restrict the sale of **electronic battery devices** (510 thread-sized) commonly used for cannabis vaping to reduce youth access.

Enhance Enforcement & Market Oversight

- **Increase penalties and fines for businesses selling cannabis illegally**, including enabling the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) to revoke tobacco licenses from violating smoke shops.
- Require **all** establishments selling nicotine, vapes, or low-THC/hemp products to be licensed under DCP for better oversight and enforcement.
- Institute a **cap on smoke shop density** to prevent excessive retailer concentration in specific areas.

Funding Asks:

- Commit **5% of cannabis tax revenue** to **local prevention efforts**.
- Increase funding to the RBHAOs to expand prevention & treatment services to include the following:
 - Dedicate funding to **under-18 cessation programs** to provide youth-focused intervention and treatment options.
 - Increase funding for **alternative-to-suspension programs** to address cannabis use in schools through education and counseling rather than punitive measures.

Funding & Prevention Investment

- The RERACA law allocates **25% of cannabis tax revenue** to the Cannabis Prevention & Recovery Services Fund (CPRSF) and **75% to the Social Equity Fund**.
- **\$570,000** has been allocated to 10 Cannabis Coalition Prevention Grants in Connecticut, providing **\$57,000** per award for an 18-month period.

For More Information, Please Contact Your RBHAO:



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