

Regional Advisory Board (RAB) of Community Anti-Drug Coalitions

April 2021 Newsletter

Did you know?

E-cigarettes are NOT safe and vaping harms health, World Health

Organization rules. The World Health Organization (WHO) issued a stern warning: "E-cigarettes are not safe and do increase the risk of heart disease and lung problems." Vaping is particularly risky for the developing brains of teenagers and can damage a growing fetus, WHO adds. (The Marijuana Report, 3/3/21)

Assessment of annual cost of substance use disorder in US hospitals

The CDC conducted an economic evaluation of 124,573,175 hospital emergency room encounters and 33,648,910 hospital inpatient encounters. They found the cost of treating substance use disorders in both settings exceeded \$13.2 billion in 2017. Costs ranged from \$4 million for inhalant-related disorders to \$7.6 billion for alcohol-related disorders. They conclude that investments in prevention and treatment, especially in hospital settings, could significantly reduce these high medical costs as well as substance use disorders themselves. (The Marijuana Report, 3/10/21)

Vaping pot worse than vaping tobacco for teens' lungs: study

A survey of nearly 15,000 teens taken between December 2016 and January 2018 shows that adolescents who vape marijuana have an increased the risk of wheezing or whistling in the chest by 81 percent compared to a 15 percent increased risk from cigarettes and a 9 percent increased risk from nicotine e-cigarettes. Vaping marijuana also increased risk of:

- sleep disturbed by wheezing by 71 percent,
- speech limited due to wheezing by 96 percent,
- wheezing during or after exercise by 33 percent, and
- dry coughing at night by 26 percent.

These are all signs of significant injury to the lungs. The CDC found that 4 out of 5 patients with the serious lung disease EVALI had vaped marijuana, versus only about 16 percent who said they were only vaping nicotine. (The Marijuana Report, 3/10/21)

U.S. Senate Drug Caucus Releases Cannabis Report: "Cannabis Policy: Public Health and Safety Issues and Recommendations." The report makes five key recommendations:

- Remove barriers to research
- Study the impact of increasing THC levels
- Study the impact of cannabis on the developing brain
- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) should continue exercising its enforcement authority regarding unregulated cannabis products

- More effectively detect cannabis-impaired driving (CADCA Coalitions Online, 3/11/21)

Teens Who Misuse Prescription Opioids More Likely to Report Suicidal

Behavior One-third of high school students who said they were currently intentionally misusing prescription opioids reported attempting suicide, compared with 19% of those who reported past misuse and 6% of those who said they had never misused an opioid prescription. The findings come from more than 13,600 high school students to the 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey. The survey found 7.4% of students reported that they had misused prescription opioids at least once before, while 7.2% reported misuse once or more within the last month. Teens who said they were currently misusing prescription opioids were more likely to say they had seriously considered suicide, made suicide plans or felt sad or hopeless in the last year. (drugfree.org, 3/11/21)

Oral nicotine pouches and lozenges are a new category of tobacco product

that includes brands such as Zyn, On! and Velo and they come in many flavors. The use of flavoring in tobacco products has been proven to appeal to youth, and sales data show that nicotine pouches are increasing in popularity. According to Nielsen data, Zyn nicotine pouch dollar sales in convenience stores increased 470% in the first half of 2020. Truth Initiative has also observed that 13% of 15–24-year-olds surveyed in Fall 2020 were past 30-day users of pouches. (The Truth Initiative, 2/9/21)

From the 2020 DEA National Drug Threat Assessment: Mexican criminal organizations are the greatest drug trafficking threat to the United States; they control most of the U.S. drug market and have established varied transportation routes, have advanced communications capabilities, and hold strong affiliations with criminal groups and gangs in the United States. Illicit fentanyl —produced in foreign clandestine laboratories and trafficked into the United States in powder and pill form—is primarily responsible for fueling the ongoing opioid crisis. Fentanyl-laced counterfeit pills continue to be trafficked across the country and remain significant contributors to the rates of overdose deaths observed across the country. As inexpensive, potent fentanyl continues to push into established heroin markets, fentanyl will augment, and in some cases supplant, white powder heroin in various domestic markets. Methamphetamine price and purity data, as well as law enforcement reporting, all indicate methamphetamine continues to be readily available throughout the United States. Seizures along with drug poisoning deaths involving methamphetamine continue to rise—purity and potency remain high while prices remain relatively low. The number of opioid dosage units available on the retail market and opioid thefts and losses reached their lowest levels in nine years. Mexico remains the most significant foreign source for marijuana in the United States; however, in U.S. markets, Mexican marijuana has largely been supplanted by domestic-produced marijuana. Constraints associated with the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily posed new challenges to criminal organizations’ movement of drugs during the first half of 2020.

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