



Cannabis and Psychosis - EPION Paper

1 message

Cannabis (HC/SC) <cannabis@canada.ca>
To: EPION Info <info@epion.ca>

Mon, Mar 13, 2017 at 10:14 AM

Dear Dr. Cheng and Ms. Hobbs,

Thank you for your email of February 17, 2017 to the Minister of Health regarding the legalization of cannabis.

I appreciate the information and thoughtful comments that you provided. As you do in your letter, the Government of Canada has expressed concerns about the high rates of cannabis use among youth and the associated health risks. One of the Government's primary objectives in legalizing, strictly regulating and restricting access to cannabis is to make it less accessible to our youth.

As you know, the Government established a Task Force in June 2016 to consult on issues fundamental to the design of a new legislative and regulatory system for restricted access to cannabis. A discussion paper, which included background information and key questions, was provided as a starting point for consultations. This paper is available here: <http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/health-system-systeme-sante/consultations/legalization-marijuana-legalisation/alt/legalization-marijuana-legalisation-eng.pdf>

The Task Force, which was led by the Honourable Anne McLellan, travelled throughout Canada and to the states where cannabis was legalized in the U.S. They met with provincial, territorial and municipal governments and experts in relevant fields, including public health, substance abuse, criminal justice, law enforcement, economics, and industry, as well as those with expertise in production, distribution, and sales. The Task Force also engaged representatives from Indigenous governments and organizations, as well as Canadian youth.

The Task Force presented its final report to the Government and the public on December 13, 2016. The final report is available online in both official languages at <http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/task-force-marijuana-groupe-etude/framework-cadre/index-eng.php>.

In its report, the Task Force made several recommendations to protect youth in this work, including a setting a minimum age for the purchase of cannabis and restricting advertising and cannabis products that are attractive to children. They also recommended implementing an evidence-informed public education campaign with an emphasis on youth, parents and vulnerable populations.

Public education will be a key part of the new system. The importance of public education and awareness activities, particularly for youth, is explicitly recognized in the discussion paper referenced above. The design and development of public education and awareness activities has already started. In May and June 2016, public opinion research was conducted to gain a better understanding of Canadians' attitudes and behaviours with respect to cannabis use. If you are interested, you can see the results of this research here: <http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/pwgsc-tpsgc/por-ef/health/2016/046-15-e/index.html> and <http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/pwgsc-tpsgc/por-ef/health/2016/049-15-e/report-rapport-eng.html>. Lessons learned from previous education and awareness activities regarding tobacco, alcohol and cannabis will also help inform the design and development of the public education and awareness activities.

With respect to the design of the new system, the Government will carefully consider the Task Force's advice as it develops legislation to be introduced in Parliament in the spring of 2017. The new legislation would come into force after being passed by Parliament and once the necessary regulations have been developed.

As the Government moves forward with its work to legalize and regulate cannabis, it will continue to work closely and collaboratively with the provinces and territories as well as with Indigenous communities, its partners, and stakeholders.

Legalizing, strictly regulating, and restricting access to cannabis is a serious, complex matter, and we are committed to doing so in a thoughtful, transparent, and evidence-informed manner.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

Eric Costen
Director General, Cannabis Legalization and Regulation Secretariat

From: admin@epion.ca [mailto:admin@epion.ca] **On Behalf Of** EPION Info
Sent: 2017-02-17 5:40 PM
To: Cannabis (HC/SC)
Subject: DRAFT WITH EC Cannabis and Psychosis - EPION Paper

Dear Minister,

We are writing on behalf of EPION (Early Psychosis Intervention Ontario Network). Following an educational event convened last November on the topic of 'Cannabis and Psychosis' EPION took the decision to write a paper outlining our concerns regarding cannabis and the mental health of our youth, specifically the risk for developing psychosis. We fully understand that legislation regarding the legalization of cannabis is currently being prepared. We hope that the process of developing this legislation will take our concerns and our recommendations into consideration. Our paper is attached.

Respectfully submitted

Chi Cheng MD, FRCP(C) & Heather Hobbs RN

EPION Co-Chairs