Advocacy and Education: knowledge translation activities in response to cannabis legalization

What is EPION?
EPION (Early Psychosis Intervention Ontario Network) is a network of people who work in early psychosis intervention (EPI) services in Ontario, Canada. EPION supports the advancement of standards of care for early psychosis intervention (EPI) services in Ontario and support the implementation of the MOHLTC’s and The ‘Cannabis Act’

Cannabis Legalization in Canada
Cannabis legalization was tabled following the Canadian Federal election of Oct 2015. The Cannabis Act was passed by the House of Commons in November 2017 with legalization proposed for summer 2018. In June 2018, final amendments were approved and it was announced that cannabis legalization would take place on October 17, 2018.

Cannabis & Psychosis Research
Research into cannabis use contains significant concerns regarding youth mental health.

- The mean age of use with regular use is 13 to 14 years for 3 months or longer. 1,5
- Marijuana% available in Canada contains high concentrations of THC compared to the past.
- Risk of relapse with continued use after first episode of psychosis.
- Increased risk of psychosis with early, regular use (3 times a week for 3 months or longer).

Dilemma: New What?
Programs expressed concern as to how to prepare for impending legalization.

Outcomes
One major outcome of EPION’s advocacy and knowledge translation work is the #mycannabisIQ campaign launched in August 2018. The #mycannabisIQ campaign is a public education initiative of evidence-based print materials and a complementary resource. To date, EPION has developed and shared 3 resources for different audiences (clinicians, families, service users).

Activities
- The #mycannabisIQ campaign aims to help people understand cannabis, and point them to the right education resources and information.
- The #mycannabisIQ campaign uses a multi-channel approach to share information and resources.

References:

For more information or to download the campaign materials, please visit:
www.epion.on.ca