

Media Release



Weeding Out the Facts: A Community Discussion About Youth Marijuana Use May 15, 2018. - For immediate release

The Timiskaming Health Unit (THU) hosted the forum Weeding Out the Facts: A Community Discussion About Youth Marijuana Use on May 2nd in Temiskaming Shores and May 3rd in Kirkland Lake. Those in attendance were provided with the latest evidence and information on youth cannabis use as well as strategies and resources to prevent and treat problematic use. Expert panelists consisted of Acting Medical Officer of Health/Family Physician, Dr. Glenn Corneil, psychiatrist Dr. Robert King, and Timiskaming Health Unit public health promoter Krystal Oviatt.

According to Dr. Corneil, “Both events initiated some very thoughtful discussion as audience members were invited to pose questions to the expert panel. The key message was that for youth who use cannabis often and over time, it can be addictive, can negatively affect brain development and may increase the risk for mental health problems.” Other Key Messages related to youth and cannabis use:

- Although most youth in Ontario do not use cannabis regularly, even occasional use has risks.
- Cannabis will still be illegal for anyone under the age of 19 in Ontario, even after legalization.
- Youth are especially vulnerable to the effects of cannabis since brain development is not complete until about the age of 25.
- Parents, guardians and caregivers play an important role in their child’s life, and can stay connected by talking to their child, knowing their friends and being prepared to answer questions. Young people are talking about cannabis and want to know the facts.
- Cannabis use during pregnancy can be harmful to a fetus’ developing brain.
- Modern cannabis has almost 10% more of the psychoactive component THC than 30 years ago.

This forum is one aspect of THU’s work in the community related to the upcoming legalization and regulation of non-medicinal cannabis. As well as working with our local school and community road safety partners related to awareness, education and effective programming, THU will continue to do surveillance to help understand local trends, consult with municipalities and advocate for regulations such as marketing and promotion to help reduce harm related to cannabis use.

Those who were unable to attend in person were provided the opportunity to view the live stream of the



event via the Timiskaming Health Unit’s Facebook page and submit their questions online. For those who were unable to attend or view the live streaming of the forum, the recorded version is available at www.timiskaminghu.com.

Dr. Glenn Corneil, Acting MOH for Timiskaming (left) and Dr. Robert King at the May 2 Cannabis Youth Forum in Dymond. Photo credit Kerry Schubert-Mackey.

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