

Our goal is to provide information to representatives regarding matters related to substance abuse, prevention, and treatment. Our coalition includes PMP (Prevention Means Progress), TFS (Tobacco Free Sarpy), TFCC (Tobacco Free Cass County), LiveWise, NFC (Nebraska Families Collaborative), NUIHC (Nebraska Urban Indian Health Coalition), ABH (Addiction & Behavioral Health), MOTAC (Metro Omaha Tobacco Action Coalition), Boys Town, The Purple Project, receives technical assistance from Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare, and is always adding to our membership.

Marijuana, Synthetic Drugs, and Prescriptions: A Review Of Learn's Previous Articles

Substance abuse is strongly linked to trauma, violence, and crime. These are problems that everyone wishes to prevent. Substance abuse prevention that focuses on maximizing an individual's or even a community's protective factors will save money, promote physical and mental health, and prevent more trauma and crime. Policies that assist in prevention will save Nebraskans thousands of lives and hundreds of millions of dollars. Please consider this a review of topics that LEARN shared over the past year:

Marijuana Key points to keep in mind



Marijuana is, essentially, Big Tobacco 2.0. Legalizing marijuana, despite any state's good intentions, has not been about decriminalization, but about commercialization. Marijuana companies have used the same tactics as tobacco companies:

1. Make ~~tobacco~~ marijuana seem ~~harmless~~ good for you.
2. Children are more susceptible to developing addiction, so advertise to children.
3. Make it more addictive (i.e. increasing the amount of THC.)

In the 1960's, marijuana had between 1-3% THC. Today, it has between 12-19% THC. This makes it more intoxicating, more addictive, and more damaging to the brain. Even the smokable marijuana of today barely scratches the surface in comparison to how damaging marijuana edibles are. The process of oil extraction has made marijuana wax, shatter, and budder: marijuana in the forms of oil with THC levels reaching up to 90%! Placed in cookies, brownies, candy, and other goods meant to attract children, these marijuana products have led to several murders, suicides, and psychotic episodes.

Marijuana weakens the immune system, so it is not ideal to give to people with autoimmune disorders, nor people that are sick with cancer or other diseases. Whether it is used with the intention of getting high or to help with a medical condition, marijuana has been scientifically proven to be harmful to the brain. Perhaps that is why the American Medical Association, The Institute of Medicine, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, American Lung Association, American Glaucoma Society, American Psychiatric Association, and American Academy of Pediatrics are all opposed to medical marijuana.

For more info, visit www.learnaboutsam.org or <http://www.rmhidta.org>

Synthetic Drugs Key points to keep in mind



Nebraska law makers have passed legislation to ban the latest chemicals that make up synthetic drugs like K2 and bath salts: (which contain substances like fertilizer, oregano, or potpourri). Some would say that the dangers of using these drugs is so evident that policies do not even need to be put in place to ban the compounds. However, banning the chemicals is an effective component of keeping these substances out of the hands of people seeking a "legal high." Another effective policy put in place by various local governments includes implementing city ordinances that target the sellers and advertisers of synthetic drugs. Another thing that LEARN advocates for is having these designer drugs banned from sites like E-bay and Amazon.

Prescription Drug Abuse Key points to keep in mind



The USA makes up 5% of the world's population, yet consumes 75% of the world's prescription drugs. It also consumes about 99% of the world's hydrocodone. LEARN has worked with members of the media to shed light on the prescription drug abuse that occurs in Nebraska. However, Nebraska remains one of two states without a PDMP, or Prescription Drug Monitoring Program. A PDMP could help close the gaps so that people cannot go from one doctor to the next, nor one pharmacy to the next in order to get multiple prescriptions and pills. As previously stated, this will save taxpayers millions of dollars.

LEARN's promise: LEARN and its members will continue to work in our schools and communities to prevent substance abuse. As policy makers, you have a large task – to improve and protect the health of all Nebraskans. We ask that you would consider the health, safety, and well-being of all Nebraskans—including those at risk for substance abuse—as you propose and implement policy that can save and improve lives.