How to address high THC products’ risks and harms: perspectives of WA stakeholders

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Presented at ADAI Symposium High THC in Legal Regulated markets
September 16th, 2022
Policy Recommendations

North America Context
- Policies
- Initiatives
- Programs

Local Stakeholders
- Concept mapping
- Interviews

Research Evidence
- Cannabis
- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- Unhealthy foods
Topics

Why stakeholders
How we found them
What we asked them
Who participated
Results and implications
Topics

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Why stakeholders

How we found them

What we asked them

Who participated

Results and implications
Strategic Dissemination

• 1000+ emails
• List servs
• Word of mouth
• Presentations in various forums
• Selected social media
Stakeholders’ groups

Community
Prevention, social justice and youth-centered organizations, parents, educators and youth

Professionals
Health care providers, law enforcement, government agencies, researchers

Cannabis’ advocates
Workers, representatives, press, consumers
Topics

Why stakeholders

How we found them

What we asked them

Who participated

Results and implications
In your opinion, how can our laws about high-THC cannabis products be strengthened in WA State to decrease risks to consumers?

1-
2-
3-
Sort and Rate

Sort ideas into groups

- Limit products to only one serving per item.
- Maximum THC limits for each product category (e.g. 25% THC for flower, 75% THC for concentrates, etc.).

Rating: impact and feasibility

Age restriction

Increase legal age for high THC products to 25 years old.

Less impactful

Very impactful

Less feasible

Very feasible
Concept Mapping
Capture collective thinking to find policy solutions

• Equitable and participatory approach
• Anonymous input
• Two rounds of participation
• Widely utilized for policy development
• Implementation Science
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Results and implications</td>
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Participation

109 total participants

160 total participants
Demographics

• 41% racial/ethnic minorities
• 54% Female
• 45% between 21-44 years

• 36% racial/ethnic minorities
• 54% Female
• 54% between 21-44 years
Participation by type of stakeholder and WA County

- Community: 41%
- Professionals: 36%
- Cannabis: 23%

County Participation:
- King County: 23%
- Pierce County: 4%
- Snohomish County: 3%
- Spokane County: 6%
- Thurston County: 16%
- Whitman County: 8%
Concern Level for High THC

Industry
Consumers
Researchers
Health Care Providers
Government Employees
Educators/School Administrators
Community Organizations
Prevention Agencies
Overall Average

1 1.5 2 2.5 3 3.5 4 4.5 5
Topics

Why stakeholders
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Results and implications
Sort and Rate

**Sort ideas into groups**
- Limit products to only one serving per item.
- Maximum THC limits for each product category (e.g. 25% THC for flower, 75% THC for concentrates, etc.).

**Rating: impact and feasibility**

**Age restriction**
- Increase legal age for high THC products to 25 years old.

**Impact and feasibility ratings**
- Impact: 1-10
  - Less impactful: 1-4
  - Very impactful: 8-10
- Feasibility: 1-10
  - Less feasible: 1-4
  - Very feasible: 8-10

**Actions**
- Add to group
- New group
- Unsorted
- Unsorted
  - 45 ideas
  - 1 idea

**Note:** The graphical user interface elements are depicted for sorting and rating ideas.
46 policy options were grouped into 7 Policy Areas

- Empower consumer/public with information
- Product and purchase caps
- Ban High-THC Products
- Licensing
- Advertising Restrictions
- Taxation
- Age Restrictions
- Do Nothing
Sort and Rate

Sort ideas into groups

Limit products to only one serving per item.

Maximum THC limits for each product category (e.g. 25% THC for flower, 75% THC for concentrates, etc.).

Rating: impact and feasibility

Age restriction

Increase legal age for high THC products to 25 years old.

Less impactful

Very impactful

Less feasible

Very feasible
## Impact vs. Feasibility

<table>
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<th>Feasibility</th>
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<tr>
<td>Low Priority</td>
<td>Feasible but not perceived as important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REMOVE</td>
<td>Low impact, not feasible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go Zone!</td>
<td>IMPACTFUL AND FEASIBLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Explore</td>
<td>Impactful ideas perceived as difficult to implement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Stakeholders’ perceptions
Ideas are plotted on the go-zone chart based on the average impact and feasibility score from all participants.
46 policy options were grouped into 7 Policy Areas

- Empower consumer/public with information
- Advertising Restrictions
- Taxation
- Product and purchase caps
- Ban High-THC Products
- Licensing
- Age Restrictions
- Do Nothing
Do Nothing
Do Nothing

Cannabis Industry & Consumers
Empower the general public with information

7 Education in schools and community centers (e.g., health class in school)

8, 9 & 26
Earmark cannabis tax for PSAs/ads and social media campaign explaining risks
Empower consumers with information

39 Maintain availability, but teach “a dab will do”

45 Post in-store warning about high-THC products

11 & 17 Place public health messages at point-of-sale

23 Warning labels / 25 Readable labels
Empower consumers with information

45 Post in-store warning about high-THC products

39 Maintain availability, but teach “a dab will do”

Community & Professionals

11 & 17 Place public health messages at point-of-sale

23 Warning labels / 25 Readable labels
10 Restrict where advertising of high-THC products is allowed

12 Eliminate ALL advertising of high-THC products

44 Ban high-THC ads on billboards
10 Restrict where advertising of high-THC products is allowed

12 Eliminate ALL advertising of high-THC products

44 Ban high-THC ads on billboards

Advertising Restrictions

Cannabis industry & Consumers
Purchase & Product Caps

Limit serving size to 10 mg THC in all products (46)

Cap THC by product category (e.g., 25% for flower, 75% for concentrates etc.) (3)

Limit serving size to 5 mg THC in all products (33)

Cap THC concentration at 10% total THC (4)
46 Limit serving size to 10 mg THC in all products

33 Limit serving size to 5mg THC in all products

3 Cap THC by product category (e.g., 25% for flower, 75% for concentrates etc.)

4 Cap THC concentration at 10% total THC

Purchase & Product Caps
18 Tax based on total THC by weight (mg)

19 Increase taxes on products >35% THC

41 Increase taxes on products thought to be harmful

Taxation
Policy Implications

• Stakeholders in WA
  • Are concerned with High THC products for non-medical use
  • Support policy changes
• Policies supported include options that are backed by science and research
  • Consumer empowerment - Health warning labels, readable labels
  • Advertising Ban
  • Tax increase proportional to THC content/concentration for non-medical use
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