



Local partnerships promoting wellness
by addressing substance abuse statewide.

March 1, 2011

Dear Public Health Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of the Connecticut Prevention Network (CPN) members, the professional organization of the Directors of Connecticut's 13 Regional Action Councils. CPN asks that you support SB 415 An Act Concerning State Oversight Over Hookah Lounges. I know that MATCH members and other concerned organizations have presented you with the facts about the health consequences of hookah or waterpipe use. CPN is wholeheartedly concerned with this, however as prevention professionals we are immensely troubled about the potential for hookah bars will spread in outlet density and popularity across the state **without the passage of SB415** . The very presence of hookah bars and lounges in a community sends the message to teens, young adults and the general population that use of these devices are safe or have minimal risks.

Tobacco can be a difficult substance to prevent as its health consequences most often occur after many years of use and communities generally are forced to focus their prevention efforts on other drugs that present immediate health and social consequences such as alcohol or prescription drug misuse. Increasing the number and variety of establishments where tobacco is available, such as in a hookah bar, only makes prevention of tobacco use more difficult for communities and prevention organizations. We know that increased number of liquor licenses in a geographic area increases the likelihood that underage and problem drinking will occur, we also know that the closer someone resides to one of Connecticut's casinos, the more likely it is they will become a problem or pathological gambler. It is safe to assume that the closer someone lives or works to hookah establishments, the more likely it is that they will start or continue smoking. Please make our difficult job as prevention professionals more successful by passing SB 415-An Act Concerning State Oversight Over Hookah Lounges. Thank you for your time and interest in this important public health issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bonnie W. Smith'.

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