Connecticut Department of Public Health

Testimony Presented Before the Judiciary Committee

March 2, 2020

Commissioner Renée D. Coleman-Mitchell, M.P.H.
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Senate Bill 16, An Act Concerning the Adult Use of Cannabis

The Department of Public Health (DPH) provides the following information in regards to Senate Bill 16, which legalizes recreational marijuana for those over 21 years of age. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.

Sections 42 and 43 of the bill, in part, outline where smoking, vaping and ENDS use is prohibited. Secondhand cannabis smoke can be equally harmful or even more detrimental to others than secondhand tobacco smoke, so it is imperative that the restrictions apply to secondhand cannabis smoke and aerosol as well.1, 2 The harm caused by exposure to secondhand smoke is extensive and well-documented, and the U.S. Surgeon General has determined that there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.3, 4 Smoke-free environments also help to prevent youth from starting to use tobacco or marijuana, and support users who are trying to quit. Establishing smoke-free environments is the only proven way to prevent exposure, as research has shown that secondhand smoke cannot be controlled by ventilation, and creating separate areas does not eliminate the hazard of exposure to secondhand smoke. 5, 6

Studies have also found that aerosol produced by electronic nicotine delivery systems and vapor products (ENDS) is not harmless. Most ENDS contain and emit numerous potentially toxic substances and the aerosol produced can contain ingredients including nicotine, ultrafine particles, volatile organic compounds such as benzene, and heavy metals such as lead.7, 8 Secondhand cannabis smoke contains fine particulate matter and many of the same cancer-causing substances and toxic chemicals as secondhand tobacco smoke. 9

The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) has updated its national indoor air quality standards to include both ENDS aerosol and cannabis smoke due to these health concerns.10

We appreciate the inclusion of exceptions for workplaces in Section 44 of the bill, which will further protect public health and safety. The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health recommends that employers establish and maintain smoke-free workplaces that protect those

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in workplaces from secondhand exposure to tobacco smoke and airborne emissions from ENDS.\textsuperscript{1} Prohibiting smoking and ENDS use in any area of any place of employment will protect workers, customers and visitors from exposure to secondhand smoke and aerosol and support those who are trying to quit. It is not possible to establish separate, safe smoking areas that eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke.

Prohibiting smoking and ENDS use within 25 feet of any door, operable window or air-intake vent of any building will protect persons entering and leaving the building as well as those inside; secondhand smoke levels outdoors can reach significant levels thus exposing nonsmokers to the same health risks as the smokers.\textsuperscript{12}

Finally, the Department appreciates being included in Section 39 of the bill as one of the state agencies responsible for making recommendations on efforts to promote public health, mitigate the misuse of cannabis, and the effective treatment of addiction to cannabis with a particular focus on individuals under twenty-one years of age.

Thank you for your consideration of this information.


\textsuperscript{11} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. Current Intelligence

\textsuperscript{12} Tobacco Control Legal Consortium. Regulating Tobacco Use Outdoors. July 2016

\textsuperscript{13} Bulletin 67: Promoting Health and Preventing Disease through Workplace Tobacco Policies. April 2015

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