

Donna Conkling

From: Linda Richter <LRichter@toendaddiction.org>
Sent: Thursday, December 02, 2021 11:27 PM
To: Mayor
Cc: Clerk's Department
Subject: Comments on marijuana dispensaries in Scarsdale Village

CAUTION: External sender.

Dear Mayor Veron,

Thank you for taking the time to read comments from the community regarding the debate around marijuana dispensaries in Scarsdale. I'm a resident of Edgemont and I spoke briefly at the village board meeting in late October.

I did want to reiterate some points, in case they're helpful. For context, I've been working in the field of substance use prevention research and policy for over 20 years. I've thoroughly reviewed the research literature on marijuana and youth, along with similar bodies of research on alcohol and tobacco products. I've published data-based articles in peer-reviewed journals and commentaries in major news outlets; created reports, guides and presentations to educate parents, schools, health professionals and policymakers on the issue; and am currently completing a project reviewing the youth protection provisions in states throughout the country that have legalized marijuana. I have no ulterior motive or agenda other than to protect the health and wellbeing of young people.

Knowing what I do, there's really no good way to spin the adverse effects of increasing young people's exposure to marijuana. Even under the best of circumstances, where the dispensaries are tightly regulated and carefully restrict youth access to their products, their presence will increase the availability of marijuana in the community, thereby increasing youth access (e.g., in homes where adults have it; accessing it through older siblings or friends, or via fake IDs). Their presence also undoubtedly normalizes use, and perceptions of risk or harm are one of the strongest protective factors against youth marijuana use. I won't speak directly to the benefits of tax revenue other than to say that whatever minor benefit that might bring to the community hardly seems worth the harm to young people's health and safety. I know others have argued that some neighboring towns are opting in, so why not have Scarsdale benefit as well. I would just note that the research does clearly show that proximity to dispensaries is directly associated with increased use among youth. The pro-marijuana message that allowing such dispensaries to operate will send to the kids in Scarsdale will be loud and clear.

I'd be happy to pass along data, statistics, research, key points, etc., if that would be helpful in the decision-making process.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of these issues. I appreciate your leadership on it and would be happy to help the village of Scarsdale in any way I can, regardless of the outcome of this vote, with regard to helping to prevent all forms of substance use and addiction among young people in our town.

Best wishes,
Linda Richter

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