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Marijuana Policy Statement

Prevention Works! VT (PW! VT) and Vermont's prevention coalitions are opposed to the creation of a commercial system for retail sales of recreational marijuana and clearly want to refute statements that commercialization of marijuana is needed to provide tax dollars for prevention services.

It is true that the prevention system in VT is under-funded and lacks necessary resources to implement effective strategies with enough frequency, intensity, and duration to adequately prevent substance abuse in our communities, however, **taxation and regulation that allows for commercialization is not good prevention.**

Important lessons can be learned from our two already legal drugs -- alcohol and tobacco -- of how an open market fuels greater harm. Alcohol and tobacco are easy to obtain. Commercialization glamorizes their use and furthers their social acceptance. High profits make aggressive marketing worthwhile for sellers. Addiction is simply the price of doing business.

In fact, effective public health strategies do not rely on industry-generated revenue. (*Please remember that the Tobacco Master Settlement funds that supported tobacco prevention in VT were awarded as a result of a lawsuit, not taxation or corporate philanthropy.*) The rates of alcohol use among youth and young adults in Vermont currently exceed marijuana rates, and without anything like the Master Settlement Agreement to support additional prevention measures, those rates continue to challenge our communities. Despite our tax and regulate system, alcohol is by far the most accessible and abused substance by young people in Vermont.

And similarly, a marijuana/ cannabis market would generate more promotion, more access, and insufficient tax revenue to support necessary prevention efforts. A taxation and regulation scheme cannot predict that commercialization will create a safer atmosphere for youth or other vulnerable populations in Vermont.

We have worked for decades to educate individuals and build healthier communities to make substance use less likely. We have been at the forefront of addressing emerging alcohol and other drug issues in our communities. We will continue to address the drug issues our neighbors face and invite you to demonstrate solidarity with our work by ensuring adequate investment in proper safety measures, research, and **prevention strategies, including education, precedes any further changes in the legal status of marijuana.**

Our opposition to commercialization is not rooted in morality or outdated anti-drug ideology. **Reducing marijuana use by youth AND adults** is essential to improving the health, education, and productivity of Vermonters.

We believe that science and evidence – not special interests or corporations – must drive marijuana policy in Vermont.

Statement supported by:

Prevention Works! VT

Black River Area Community Coalition

serving the towns of Ludlow, Plymouth & Mt. Holly

Brattleboro Area Prevention Coalition

serving the towns of Brattleboro, Dummerston, Guilford, Putney, & Vernon

Burlington Partnership for a Healthy Community

serving the city of Burlington

Central VT New Directions Coalition

serving the towns of Adamant, Barre, Berlin, Cabot, Calais, Duxbury, East Montpelier, Fayston, Graniteville, Marshfield, Middlesex, Montpelier, Moretown, Northfield, Plainfield, Roxbury, Waitsfield, Warren, Waterbury, Websterville, Woodbury & Worcester

Essex CHIPS, Inc.

serving the towns of Essex, Essex Junction & Westford

Franklin County Caring Communities

serving the towns of Bakersfield, Berkshire, Enosburg, Fairfield, Fairfax, Franklin, Fletcher, Georgia, Highgate, Montgomery, Richford, Sheldon, Swanton & St. Albans

Greater Falls Connections

serving the towns of Athens, Grafton, Rockingham (including the Village of Bellows Falls, Saxtons River) & Westminster

Healthy Lamoille Valley

serving the towns of Belvidere, Cambridge, Craftsbury, Eden, Elmore, Greensboro, Hardwick, Hyde Park, Jeffersonville, Johnson, Morrisville, Stannard, Stowe, Walden, Waterville, Woodbury & Wolcott

Milton Community Youth Coalition

serving the town of Milton

Mt. Ascutney Prevention Partnership

serving the towns of Barnard, Bridgewater, Hartland, Killington, Pomfret, Reading, Weathersfield & West Windsor

Orleans Northern Essex Pitr Collaborative

serving the towns of Albany, Averill, Averys Gore, Barton, Bloomfield, Brighton, Brownington, Brunswick, Canaan, Coventry, Derby, Derby Line, East Charleston, Ferdinand, Glover, Holland, Irasburg, Island Pond, Jay, Lemington, Lewis, Lowell, Morgan, Newport City, Newport Town/Center, Norton, Troy/N. Troy, Warners Grant, Warren Gore, West Charleston, West Glover, Westfield & Westmore

Partners for Prevention Rutland, VT

serving the towns of Belmont, Benson, Brandon, Castleton, Chittenden, Clarendon, Danby, Fair Haven, Florence, Hortonia, Hortonville, Hubbardton, Ira, Killington, Mendon, Middletown Springs, Mount Holly, Mount Tabor, Pawlet, Pittsfield, Pittsford, Poultney, Proctor, Rutland, Shrewsbury, Sudbury, Tinmouth, Wallingford, Wells, West Haven & West Rutland

West River Valley Thrives

serving the towns of Brookline, Jamaica, Marlboro, Newfane, Townshend, Wardsboro & Windham

Winooski Partnership for Prevention

serving the city of Winooski

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