

Cannabis



The Issue

- Use and possession of non-medicinal cannabis will be legal in Ontario as of October 17, 2018.¹
- The proportion of residents that reported using cannabis more than once is higher in Algoma, compared to the North East Local Health Integration Network (NE LHIN) region and Ontario.²
 - Algoma: 42.1%
 - NE LHIN: 37.8%
 - Ontario: 29.8%
- Many health and societal concerns are associated with cannabis exposure and use, including:³⁻⁵
 - Long-term problems with brain and neurological development when exposure happens in pregnant women, fetuses, infants, children, and adolescents
 - Effects on the brain such as problems with memory, learning, movement and coordination
 - Hallucinations and impaired perception
 - Impaired driving and injuries (including fatalities)
 - Mental health problems (including psychosis and dependence)
 - Lung and breathing problems

Return on Investment



- Funding community-wide prevention and education strategies allows for more influence over risk factors, which can lead to a decrease in harms as well as cost-savings related to paramedic, fire services, and law enforcement.
- A public health approach that includes municipal policy development, zoning bylaws, and business clustering considerations can help ensure accountability and produce net benefits for communities.^{6,7}



Policy options for Municipal Governments

- Implement a public health approach that **prioritizes public health and safety over profits**.⁸ Municipalities, public health, primary health care, education, and social services can work together to contextualize cannabis use, discuss retail logistics, and prioritize public health and safety in the local setting.
- Develop **Municipal Cannabis Policies**, similar to [Municipal Alcohol Policies](#).⁹
 - Municipal policies set parameters for substance use on municipally owned/rented property, and can help reduce risks associated with cannabis use while promoting a culture of responsibility.
- Implement **zoning bylaws to restrict cannabis use and exposure**.⁶
 - Consider land use regulations to prevent clustering of businesses⁷, e.g., tobacco, alcohol, and cannabis, near schools and neighbourhoods.

Interested in building a healthy community? Contact Algoma Public Health at 705-942-4646 ext.3066 or info@algomapublichealth.com

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