

ALLIANCE NEWS

Alliance for Better Communities

SPECIAL EDITION



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WHAT'S IN NEW YORK'S PROPOSED RECREATIONAL-USE MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION BILL?

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Although Governor Cuomo's future is uncertain, his push for recreational marijuana legalization has resulted in the final version of the legalization bill being released, and it is likely to pass by Democrats. This past June, possession of small amounts of pot was decriminalized, and prior convictions were expunged. How to tax marijuana remains an issue as does the manner of testing and marketing products. Although people involved in the substance abuse counseling field generally oppose legalization, the question is whether it is in the public interest to regulate the growing, marketing and selling of the drug.



Cuomo refers to the proposed legislation as an *"equitable adult-use cannabis program"*. An Office of Cannabis Management would be created to oversee the program, as well as the State's existing medical and cannabinoid hemp programs. Licensing opportunities and assistance would be offered to entrepreneurs in communities of color. It is claimed that legalization would generate more than \$300 million in tax revenue.¹ The plan is to promote responsible use, limiting the sale of cannabis products to adults 21 and over and establishing stringent quality and safety controls including strict regulation of the packaging, labeling, advertising and testing of all cannabis products. Adults would be able to cultivate up to six plants for personal use. There would also be automatic expungements of prior cannabis convictions.



For people wanting to start marijuana businesses, low or zero –interest loans would be provided to qualifying applicants. Senator Liz Krueger (D) and 18 co-sponsors filed the legislation. Krueger stated: *"But now, faced with the impacts of the pan-*

demic, the potential for legalization to create new jobs, economic growth, and out-year tax revenue for the state is more important than ever.”²

Under the Bill, There would be no penalties for public possession of up to three ounces of cannabis or 24 grams of marijuana concentrates, and people could store up to five pounds of cannabis at home. Social consumption sites and delivery services would be permitted. Cannabis products would be subject to a state tax of nine percent, plus an additional four percent local tax that would be split between counties and cities/towns/villages, with 75 percent of the local earnings going to the municipalities and 25 percent to the counties. Police could not use the odor of cannabis to justify searches. The State Department of Health would oversee a study of technologies for detecting cannabis-impaired driving, after which it could approve and certify the use of such a test. The state’s existing medical cannabis program would also be changed to expand the list of qualifying conditions and allow patients to smoke marijuana products. Smokable hemp flower sales would also be allowed.³

One of the more controversial parts of the Bill is the licensure of delivery services for marijuana. Cuomo has stated that these services would *“offer a low-cost entry point into the industry”* particularly benefiting poorer communities. Local governments would have the ability to opt out of allowing delivery within their jurisdictions.⁴ The Bill would not only allow delivery of the drug, it would permit club-like lounges or “consumption sites” where marijuana, but not alcohol, could be consumed.⁵ Those involved in the addiction field are particularly concerned about these provisions and their potential for vastly increasing the number of people developing problems with substance abuse.

Although the Bill supposedly is designed to benefit communities of color, not all black leaders are convinced that people of color are guaranteed a significant share of the potentially \$3 billion industry. They want to be assured that some of that money will go toward job training programs, and that minority entrepreneurs will receive licenses to cultivate or sell



the marijuana. They are intent on not repeating what they see as other states’ mistakes. None of the states with legalized recreational use ensured that minority communities would share in any economic windfall of legalization.⁶ While there are hurdles ahead, New York’s Recreational Use Bill is likely to pass soon.

MARCH MEETING CONTINUES ONLINE AS THE PANDEMIC WANS



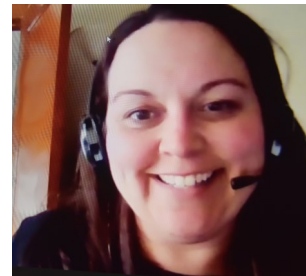
Ernesto A. Morales, PH.D, MPH, CHES, discusses adverse childhood experiences and illness and the importance of using the lifecourse model to address health disparities.



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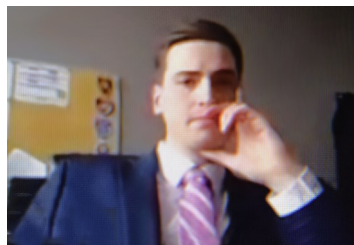
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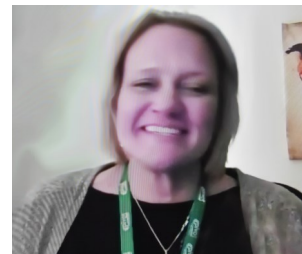
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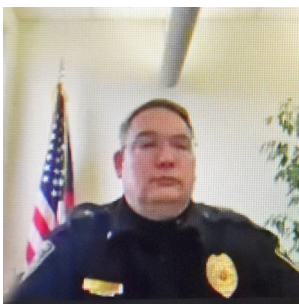
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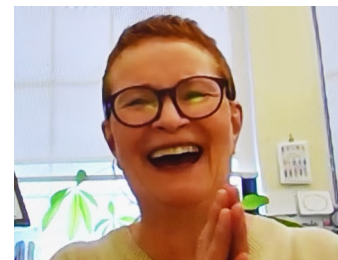
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As New York moves toward marijuana legalization, experts warn it may lead to more overdoses in kids partially retrieved from: <https://abcnews.go.com/Health/york-moves-marijuana-legalization-experts-warn-lead-overdoses/story?id=76712674>

New York State is on the brink of legalizing marijuana for recreational use -- following the footsteps of several other states -- but experts warn it could lead to more overdoses in kids.

Experts say there has been a recent rise in pediatric exposures to cannabis, and "marijuana edibles" are landing children in emergency rooms across the country....

According to a study published by the American Academy of Pediatrics, poison center calls associated with unintentional pediatric exposures to cannabis have increased in the United States from 2017 to 2019, largely as a result of the accidental consumption of edible cannabis products. ...

Lee expects more marijuana products to be left out in the open at people's houses because users may no longer feel compelled to hide them. But it's these behaviors what could put kids at an increased risk of exposure. ...