

Cannabis Public Health Advisory Council Meeting #16 -Minutes
Wednesday, April 15, 2026 · 4:00 – 6:00pm

Members Present:

Dr. Madhumi Mitra
Dr. Deondra Asike
Dr. David Gorelick
Jocelyn Bratton-Payne
Karrissa Miller
Dawn Berkowitz
Audrey Johnson
Dr. Nishant Shah
Christine Nizer
Dr. Leigh Vinocur
Martin Proulx

Members Not Present:

Sen. Benjamin Kramer
Del. Terri L Hill
Arinze Ifekauche
Dr. Elizabeth Kromm
Jason Semanoff

MDH Staff Present:

Erin Portillo
Dana Moncrief
Kate Natafgi
Snehal Gawhale
Sara Demetriou

**LRC- Cannabis Technical Staff
Present:**

Mathew Swinburne

Members from Public:

Dr. David Nathan

1. Open Meeting. 4:02 PM.

- a. Dr. Deondra Asike officially called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. on April 15, 2026. She reminded attendees that the meeting was open to the public for observation purposes, noted that disruptions would not be tolerated, and stated that time permitting, there would be an opportunity for public comment. Dr. Asike also asked whether there were any objections to recording the meeting for recordkeeping purposes; no objections were raised. She then noted the full agenda for the meeting and welcomed members following the conclusion of the legislative session.
- b. Erin Portillo took a roll call; a quorum of 10 members was present. Dr. Deondra Asike provided several administrative reminders regarding annual financial disclosure requirements, required ethics and Open Meetings Act trainings, and state travel reimbursement regulations. Members were reminded that Open Meetings Act training is required for council leadership positions and encouraged for all members.

The council also reviewed attendance expectations outlined in the bylaws, including requirements for governor-appointed members to attend at least 50% of full council meetings and participate in at least one workgroup meeting annually. Dr. Asike noted that attendance summary letters would be distributed to members following the meeting. Staff also agreed to share the Open Meetings Act training link in a follow-up communication.

Dr. Asike additionally clarified that designated alternates may attend meetings and participate in discussions on behalf of their organizations but are not permitted to vote.

- c. The council then reviewed proposed edits to the January 21 meeting minutes. Erin Portillo noted that the suggested revisions included using the full name of the Legal Resource Center and correcting the reference to the relevant legislation subcommittee. During discussion, David Gorelick commented on the distinction between preserving the exact language used during meetings and making edits for accuracy and clarity. Following discussion, the council approved the January 21 meeting minutes with the proposed edits by motion and second, with no opposition or abstentions

2. Standardized Cannabis Labeling

Dr. Deondra Asike introduced guest speaker David Nathan, a Distinguished Life Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association and Clinical Associate Professor at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, who presented on standardized cannabis product labeling and public health considerations. Dr. Nathan discussed the importance of consistent cannabis labeling standards to support consumer safety, public health, and future interstate commerce. Dr. Nathan highlighted the

ASTM-approved International Intoxicating Cannabinoid Product Symbol (IICPS), reviewed how Maryland's current symbol compares to other state models, and encouraged Maryland to consider adopting the standardized symbol or allowing it as an approved alternative.

Dr. Nathan also reviewed recommendations for concise, evidence-based warning language focused on higher-risk populations, including children, pregnant individuals, and people with psychiatric vulnerabilities. Dr. Nathan presented concepts for standardized cannabis information labels modeled after nutrition facts panels, including dosage information, cannabinoid content, QR codes, and a proposed THC content badge designed to clearly communicate THC levels on beverages and packaged products.

Council members discussed the scientific validity and consumer usefulness of including strain information on labels, as well as the current evidence base for warnings related to high-potency cannabis products and mental health risks. Dr. Nathan acknowledged limitations in existing research and emphasized the importance of continued scientific review and participation in consensus standards organizations such as ASTM and ISO. Dr. Nathan concluded by offering to share additional resources and information with the Council.

3. CPHAC Position Elections

The Council conducted nominations and voting for the position of Council Chair. Erin Portillo reported that two nominations had been received for Dr. Deondra Asike to continue serving in the role. Dr. Asike confirmed her willingness to continue as Chair. A motion was made by Dr. David Gorelick to reelect Dr. Asike by acclamation, which was seconded. Following discussion, members agreed to proceed with a voice vote rather than a private ballot. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote, with no objections or abstentions recorded.

Following the vote, Dr. Asike thanked members for their support and expressed appreciation for the Council's collaborative work and accomplishments over the past two years. She highlighted the Council's role as a credible public health voice in Maryland and shared her interest in strengthening connections with other public health-focused organizations to further expand the Council's impact moving forward.

4. Legislative Updates and Discussion and Preparation for the 2026 Report

The Council received a legislative session wrap-up presentation from Mathew Swinburne and the Legal Resource Center team summarizing key cannabis-related bills considered during the 2026 General Assembly session. Discussion focused on legislation related to impaired driving, cannabis use in vehicles with minors present, cannabis agent training requirements, council membership changes, cannabis advertising regulations, and proposed cannabinoid beverage sales through alcohol retailers. Members discussed

concerns regarding cannabis advertising restrictions, youth exposure, therapeutic and medical claims in advertising, packaging and labeling regulations, and potential loopholes related to interior dispensary displays.

Mr. Swinburne reported that several bills of concern to the Council, including Matteo's Law, cannabis use in vehicles with minors, expanded outdoor advertising, and cannabinoid beverage sales in alcohol retail locations, did not pass. Members noted that MCA's departmental bill updating cannabis agent training requirements and legislation removing the Department of Agriculture representative from the Council had passed. The Council also discussed MCA's draft proposed regulations related to cannabis advertising, packaging, labeling, and therapeutic claims, including timelines and options for submitting informal and formal public comments.

Following discussion, members agreed to convene an informal workgroup meeting with MCA and Legal Resource Center staff to review the draft regulations and consider potential Council feedback prior to the close of the informal comment period. Members also discussed establishing a more proactive process for developing annual Council recommendations through a rolling submission system, allowing members and workgroups to submit recommendation ideas throughout the year rather than waiting until the annual report process.

5. Public Comment

No comments from the public.

6. Adjournment 6:09 pm