

Cannabis Public Health Advisory Council Meeting #14-Minutes
Thursday, October 16, 2025 · 4:00 – 6:00 PM

Members Present:

Dr. Deondra Asike
Dr. David Gorelick
Dr. Leigh Vinocur
Karrissa Miller
Sen. Benjamin Kramer
Dr. Elizabeth Kromm
Martin Proulx
Dawn Berkowitz
Jason Semanoff
Del. Terri L Hill
Dr. Nishant Shah
Arinze Ifekauche
Audrey Johnson
Tim Kerns (on behalf of Christine Nizer)

MDH Members Present:

Erin Portillo
Dana Moncrief
Kate Natafji
Sara Demetriou
Snehal Gawhale
Alexandra Nowalk
Pamela Williams

Members from Public:

Erin Hopwood
Tabatha Robinson

Members Not Present:

Jocelyn Bratton-Payne
Christine Nizer

1. Open Meeting. 4:04 PM.

- a. The meeting was called to order by Dr. Deondra Asike, Council Chair, at 4:04 PM on Thursday, October 16, 2025.
- b. New members were invited to introduce themselves. New members include:
 - Arinze Ifekauche, Deputy Director of Communications and Legislative Affairs in the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy
 - Audrey Johnson, Executive Director of the Office of Social Equity in the Department of Social and Economic Mobility
 - Christine Nizer, Administrator of the Maryland Vehicle Administration. Ms. Nizer was absent, but her colleague, Tim Kerns, Director of MDOT's MVA Highway Safety Office, was present on MVA's behalf.
- c. Kate Natafji took a roll call; a quorum of 13 members was present.
- d. Dr. Asike reviewed the meeting minutes from September 17, 2025. Citing the inclusion of edits from Dr. Gorelick regarding subcommittee names, Dr. Asike requested a motion to approve the minutes for the September meeting. Karissa Miller motioned to approve the minutes, David Gorelick seconded the motion. The Council voted to approve the revised minutes; there were no objections or abstentions.
- e. Karissa Miller presented the letter of support drafted on behalf of the Youth Cannabis Use Mitigation workgroup for changes to the MSDE educational framework. Members provided feedback and edits to the letter during the meeting. Following the end of the discussion, Karissa Miller motioned to approve the letter as edited by the Council. David Gorelick seconded the motion. The Council voted: 10 members voted to approve the letter as amended, 3 members abstained, no members opposed.
- f. Dr. Asike provided an overview of the tentative schedule of CPHAC meetings for 2026. These dates are: January 21, April 15, July 15, and October 21. Additional dates may be scheduled for Council business.
- g. Dr. Asike then invited new members to volunteer to be a member of one of the Council's workgroups.

2. 2025 Legislative Recommendations Report Review (and vote)

Erin Portillo presented the 2025 Legislative Recommendations Report to Council members for final review, consideration, and approval. The report had been

circulated to the Council for review ahead of the meeting; final member feedback was incorporated into the final version during the October 16 meeting.

The official name of the “Healthcare Professionals Education Workgroup” was confirmed.

Workgroup leads provided brief overviews of their respective recommendations from the annual report to orient new members. Dawn Berkowitz presented on behalf of the Data and Surveillance Workgroup, Karrissa Miller presented for the Youth Cannabis Use Mitigation Workgroup, and Leigh Vinocur presented for the Healthcare Professionals Education Workgroup.

Kate Natafji (MDH) provided an overview of Dr. Gorelick’s previously proposed edits to the report. Noting no additional edits to the document, Dr. Asike requested a motion to approve the recommendations report as revised by the Council. David Gorelick motioned to approve the report, Karissa Miller seconded the motion. The Council voted with 9 members in favor, 4 members abstained (Martin Proulx, Jason Semanoff, Del. Terri L Hill, Arinze Ifekauche), 0 members opposed.

3. 2024 International Cannabis Policy Study: Maryland Report Highlights

Dawn Berkowitz and Christine Boyd from the Maryland Cannabis Administration presented highlights from the 2024 International Cannabis Policy Study (ICPS), an annual multi-country survey examining cannabis use, policy, and public health impacts. Maryland expanded its participation in 2024 to include 2,560 residents—an eightfold increase from prior years—allowing for improved data analysis to evaluate changes from before to after adult-use legalization.

Key findings addressed gaps in public understanding of cannabis risks, use during pregnancy, impaired driving, and cessation support. Additional insights included the need for safer cannabis storage practices, increased consumer education on THC potency, and continued public health messaging, as exposure to cannabis marketing remains higher than exposure to health or safety messages.

Maryland will continue enhanced ICPS participation in 2025, focusing on high-potency products, regulated versus unregulated purchasing, and exposure to secondhand cannabis smoke to inform future public health and education efforts.

Dr. Asike then reminded members about the upcoming meeting on December 10, 2025 to finalize the Council’s bylaws. Dr. Asike also noted that a quorum of members must be present in order for the bylaws to be approved.

Dr. Gorelick inquired about vacant Council seats and Dr. Asike provided a brief update, stating that the Council is coordinating with the Governor's Office of Appointments to fill the 3 vacancies.

Dr. Gorelick inquired about the status of the Legal Resource Center (LRC) -Cannabis contract and their technical legal support for the Council. Dana Moncrief of MDH provided a brief update that contracts with LRC-Cannabis are in place, staff are being brought back, and LRC-Cannabis will be able to attend future Council meetings to provide technical support.

4. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

5. Adjourn. 5:50 PM.

Citing no more items on the agenda for the day, Dr. Asike asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Gorelick seconded the motion. All members present were in favor of adjourning.