

Cannabis Public Health Advisory Council Meeting #12- Minutes
Wednesday, September 17, 2025 · 4:00 – 6:00 PM

Members Present:

Dr. Madhumi Mitra
Dr. Deondra Asike
Dr. David Gorelick
Jocelyn Bratton-Payne
Karrissa Miller
Sen. Benjamin Kramer
Elizabeth Kromm
Martin Proulx
Dawn Berkowitz
Jason Semanoff
Del. Terri L Hill
Nishant Shah

Members Not Present:

Dr. Leigh Vinocur

MDH Members Present:

Erin Portillo
Dana Moncrief
Sara Demetriou
Snehal Gawhale

Members from Public:

Erin Hopwood
Tabatha Robinson

1. Open Meeting. 4:04 PM.

- a. The meeting was called to order by Dr. Deondra Asike, Council Chair, at 4:04 PM on Wednesday, September 17, 2025.
- b. Erin Portillo took a roll call; a quorum of 12 members was present.
- c. Dr. Asike reviewed the meeting minutes from July 16, 2025. Citing the inclusion of edits from Dr. Gorelick regarding subcommittee names, Dr. Asike requested a motion to approve the minutes for the July 16, 2025 meeting. Dr. Gorelick motioned to approve the minutes, Sen. Kramer seconded the motion. The Council voted to approve the minutes, there were no objections or abstentions.
- d. An ad hoc virtual meeting is scheduled for December 10th from 3:00–4:00 PM to finalize revisions to the bylaws. Attendance by all members is encouraged to ensure a quorum for approval. Scheduling conflicts with an existing healthcare professional education work group meeting. The workgroup lead will be contacted about scheduling.

2. Recommendations Report - Workgroup Breakouts

The Council broke into work group break-out sessions to discuss 2025 Recommendation Report work group recommendations at 4:09 PM.

a. Breakout Group Notes – Data Workgroup

The group reviewed draft recommendations for data and surveillance to be included in the upcoming report, building on progress from the 2024 recommendations. Members emphasized that recommendations should be actionable within the next 12 months, while continuing to document ongoing efforts.

Key points discussed:

- Sustaining and enhancing surveys: Continue strengthening data collection through the Youth Risk Behavior Survey and Youth Tobacco Survey, with cannabis questions already added in 2024. Maintain cannabis-related items in the PRAMS survey for pregnant and breastfeeding women when the next question window opens in 2027.
- International Cannabis Policy Survey (ICPS): MCA completed ICPS data collection in 2024 and will present findings in October. The group recommended continued implementation with a focus on consumer purchasing patterns, product potency, and policy relevance.
- Cannabis use surveillance system: Members stressed the need for MCA and MDH to jointly develop a comprehensive written document/dashboard that integrates mandated and other relevant data sources (e.g., state police, poison control, Health Services Cost Review Commission [HSCRC]). This would organize

available data, analysis, dissemination, and evaluation into a coordinated public health surveillance framework.

- Adult BRFSS survey: Recommend maintaining inclusion of the optional marijuana module and prioritizing state-added cannabis questions, especially on impaired driving and secondhand smoke exposure.
- High-potency products: Members highlighted the growing concern around high-THC products. Recommendation wording was strengthened to state that MCA/ATCC should study the range of THC content in products sold in Maryland and assess potential public health impacts.
- Health Information Exchange (CRISP): Explore new opportunities for querying CRISP data to identify diagnoses of cannabis use disorder and relevant coding, now possible under updated data access policies.

Overall, the group supported carrying forward 2024 recommendations while adding new priorities for 2025 to ensure coordinated, actionable, and comprehensive surveillance of cannabis use and its impacts.

b. Breakout Group Notes –Youth Cannabis Use

The group went through recommendations made in 2023 and 2024 reports, to set the foundation for any new recommendations to be made in 2025. The group supported carrying forward past years' recommendations and proposing one new recommendation for MDH to allocate resources from the Cannabis Public Health Fund to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to establish a statewide online training model for educators and counselors, which would be complemented by additional ongoing training opportunities.

The group spent the remainder of the time debating whether and how to support 2025 updates made to the Maryland State Department of Education's Comprehensive Health Education Framework – specifically the update that replaces the term “marijuana” with cannabis” throughout the guidance. This update review takes place every eight years. The Framework has not yet been brought to the state board, is still in draft form, and can be changed. The Workgroup specifically discussed how to best support Maryland constituents, most especially Maryland youth, their families, and educational professionals during this Framework revision.

Discussion points included:

- Updating this language helps ensure the framework reflects current language that is free from bias and rooted in best practice, however, concern remains that updating the terminology does not reflect the language and verbiage commonly used and understood among the students and constituents it is meant to serve.

- The term “marijuana” is more familiar to and understood by youth, families and community members; changing it would mean attempting to “retrain” how they use and understand these products, rather than “meeting youth where they are.”
- The framework is meant for educators, not the students, and provided three examples of the verbiage they will find in the document that the educators will be responsible for delivering to the students in a manner and using terms students understand.
- There is benefit in harmonizing the language that exists in statute with the information we are providing to our educators as well as what the state has prioritized from an education standpoint.
- Another option would be to integrate and incorporate both the terms cannabis and marijuana to help align them with what is in the literature.
- Using one term or another will likely not have a significant impact on how students are looking at the product and how seriously they will be taking the information regarding the serious health impacts of cannabis.

The Workgroup brought the issue to the Council to vote on three options:

- Remain neutral on the issue
- Vote to support MSDE’s language change from “marijuana” to “cannabis” throughout the Framework; or
- Vote to support MSDE to continue using “marijuana” rather than “cannabis”, or to use combined verbiage, throughout the Framework.

3. Workgroup Report-Outs and Council Discussion

The Council reconvened from work group sessions at 4:40PM.

Dr. Asike presented on behalf of the Healthcare Provider Education Work Group. The group recommended that MDH and MCA collaborate with Maryland’s health professional licensing boards to assess the feasibility of maintaining an online list of vetted cannabis education programs for healthcare providers. The list would include programs that include CPHAC’s recommended education topics, disclose sponsorship, and exclude those associated with the cannabis industry. The recommendation was approved with edits (two abstentions, all others in favor).

Dawn Berkowitz presented on behalf of the Data and Surveillance Work Group. The group reaffirmed the importance of continuing last year’s recommendations, particularly on youth and maternal health data collection, and introduced four new recommendations. These included: developing a comprehensive cannabis surveillance overview document, maintaining cannabis-related questions in the BRFSS adult survey, studying THC potency levels in Maryland products, and exploring the use of CRISP to track cannabis use disorder diagnoses. The

Council approved these recommendations with one abstention (all others in favor).

Karrissa Miller presented on behalf of the Youth Use Mitigation Work Group. The group recommended that MDH allocate resources from the Cannabis Public Health Fund to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to establish a statewide online training model for educators and counselors. This resource would integrate existing evidence-based prevention resources, such as the Stanford Toolkit and Be Cannabis Smart Campaign, into continuing education. MCA was removed from the recommendation for clarity, as it does not oversee the Fund. The Council approved the recommendation (one abstention, all others in favor).

The Youth Use Mitigation Work Group also raised a discussion item regarding MSDE's draft revision of the state's health education framework, proposing to replace the term "marijuana" with "cannabis." After discussion on scientific accuracy, historical context, and consistency with state law, the Council voted to support the change (two abstentions, majority in favor, zero opposed).

Vote to Support Replacing "Marijuana" with "Cannabis" in the state's health education framework	
Yea	Dr. Madhumi Mitra, Dr. Deondra Asike, Dr. David Gorelick, Jocelyn Bratton-Payne, Karrissa Miller, Sen. Benjamin Kramer, Elizabeth Kromm, Dawn Berkowitz, Del. Terri L Hill
Nay	None
Abstain	Jason Semanoff, Martin Proulx

4. Vote on Recommendations + Wrap Up

Youth Use Mitigation Work Group Recommendations	
Yea	Dr. Madhumi Mitra, Dr. Deondra Asike, Dr. David Gorelick, Jocelyn Bratton-Payne, Karrissa Miller, Sen. Benjamin Kramer, Elizabeth Kromm, Martin Proulx, Dawn Berkowitz, Del. Terri L Hill
Nay	None

Abstain	Jason Semanoff
---------	----------------

Data and Surveillance Work Group Recommendations	
Yea	Dr. Madhumi Mitra, Dr. Deondra Asike, Dr. David Gorelick, Jocelyn Bratton-Payne, Karrissa Miller, Sen. Benjamin Kramer, Elizabeth Kromm, Martin Proulx, Dawn Berkowitz, Del. Terri L Hill
Nay	None
Abstain	Jason Semanoff

Healthcare Provider Education Work Group Recommendations	
Yea	Dr. Madhumi Mitra, Dr. Deondra Asike, Dr. David Gorelick, Jocelyn Bratton-Payne, Karrissa Miller, Sen. Benjamin Kramer, Elizabeth Kromm, Dawn Berkowitz, Del. Terri L Hill
Nay	None
Abstain	Martin Proulx Jason Semanoff

Dana Moncrief from MDH outlined the next steps, including compiling all approved recommendations into a final report to be sent to the legislature by December 1st, with an anticipated final vote on October 16th. Two new members, from the Motor Vehicle Administration and the Office of Social Equity, will join the Council at the October 16th meeting, and recruitment for open seats is ongoing. Dr. Asike expressed gratitude to the work group leads for their contributions to the recommendations.

5. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

6. Adjourn. 6:01 PM.

Dr. Asike asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Del. Hill made the motion and Dr. Gorelick seconded the motion. All members present were in favor of the motion.