

Press Release

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: LICADD on Legalization of Marijuana and Effects on Youth

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition held its annual Fall meeting featuring a presentation by Mr. Steve Chassman, LCSW, CASAC, Executive Director of the Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (LICADD) and Mr. Adam Birkenstock, LCSW, Director of Programming. LICADD has been a long time Coalition partner, providing alcohol and substance use prevention education to SAFE Board, Coalition members and the Glen Cove Community.

Mr. Chassman stated that the legalization of marijuana has caused issues for families, communities, emergency departments, chemical dependency programs as well as law enforcement. Below are key points of his presentation:

- Youth are under the misperception that marijuana is safe to use because it is legal. Today's marijuana is 300% more potent than marijuana smoked in the 70's.
- Marijuana use before age 18 is 4 to 7 times more likely to result in problem use – which 30% of users develop. As of 2022 it is estimated that 30.7% of high school seniors used marijuana in the past year and 13.6% reported daily use within the past month.
- 8th and 10th grade marijuana use has increased across the nation since 2021
- Marijuana is addictive and effects people psychologically (Impairs memory, learning, focus, motor control, impulse control, & decision making); Psychologically (Can cause or exacerbate anxiety, depression, & psychotic symptoms); Physiologically (Raises blood pressure & heart rate, Can change brain structure & functioning, Impacts mood, reaction time, motor functions, thinking, problem solving and memory, THC use, especially at high potency, can lead to psychotic episodes, significant motor impairment, and other mental health issues).

LICADD has seen an increase in Cannabis Use Disorder among the adolescent population. This is particularly concerning as the brain continues to develop until the age of 26. Youth who use marijuana during this stage of development are more motivated to explore and take risks- focusing on what feels good (dopamine pathways), rather than focusing on the consequences of their actions. Withdrawal symptoms include decreased appetite, mood changes, irritability, sleep difficulties, headaches, depression, stomach problems, chills, sweats that can last up to 72 hours and acute psychiatric symptoms can last up to six weeks.

The influx of vape shops that sell drug paraphernalia and synthetic THC (Delta 8) has further compounded the issue of youth substance use. Attractive packaging in the form of gummies and brownies are alluring. In 2022 there were 104 adverse events from delta-8 youth consumption reported to the FDA by Emergency Departments.

Mr. Chassman applauded the Coalition for their success in drafting and proposing a new local law added to the City Code restricting incoming vape stores to B2 District areas as strong and effective laws and regulations were needed to protect youth from deadly addiction by reducing access to tobacco, vaping products and other drug paraphernalia. The proactive stance taken by the Coalition directly addressed this concern.

To view Mr. Chassman's presentation please our visit the home page of the SAFE website at www.safeglencove.org.

To learn more about LICADD please visit <https://www.licadd.org>. If you or a loved one is suffering with a substance use disorder please contact the LICADD hotline for help at 1-631-979-1700 or call the SAFE office at 516-676-2008.

To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE's website to learn more about Mariana/Cannabis Use Disorder please visit www.safeglencove.org.