

Date: April 10, 2015	POLICY BRIEF PREPARED FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS	 OF NORTHERN LARIMER COUNTY
Staff: Dan Sapienza		

HB15-1298 - WARNING PREGNANT WOMEN OF MARIJUANA RISKS

Concerning Posting Warning Information For Pregnant Women About The Potential Risks Of Marijuana At Marijuana Businesses.

Details

Bill Sponsors:	House – Singer (D), Tate (R) Senate – Newell (D), Martinez Humenik (R)
Committee:	House Public Health Care & Human Services Senate Business, Labor, & Technology
Bill History:	04/07/2015 House Third Reading Passed - No Amendments 04/09/2015 Introduced In Senate - Assigned to Business, Labor, & Technology
Next Action:	Senate Business Hearing, Not yet on schedule

Bill Summary

This bill requires that all medical and retail marijuana stores display a sign that warns pregnant women about the risks of smoking, eating, or otherwise using marijuana. The exact warning is to be developed in conjunction with the Department of Public Health and Environment. Further, the bill prohibits knowingly directing marijuana advertisements to pregnant women.

Background

In 2014, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) conducted a review of existing literature to examine the potential health risks of marijuana use and to identify gaps in scientific knowledge about these risks.¹ The review ranked public health statements and the levels of evidence found supporting the statements.² One report in this review focused specifically on the health risks of marijuana use during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

The CDPHE review concluded that there is “moderate evidence that maternal use of marijuana during pregnancy is associated with negative effects on exposed offspring, including decreased academic ability, cognitive function, and attention. Importantly, these effects may not appear until adolescence. [The review] also found moderate evidence that maternal use of marijuana during pregnancy is associated with decreased growth in exposed offspring.”

¹ <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/monitoring-marijuana-related-health-effects>

² The committee used a standardized systematic literature review process to search and grade the existing scientific literature on health effects of marijuana. Findings were synthesized into evidence statements that summarize the quantity and quality of supporting scientific evidence including. These evidence statements were classified as follows:

- Substantial evidence which indicates robust scientific findings that support the outcome and no credible opposing scientific evidence.
- Moderate evidence which indicates that scientific findings support the outcome, but these findings have some limitations.
- Limited evidence which indicates modest scientific findings that support the outcome, but these findings have significant limitations.
- Mixed evidence which indicates both supporting and opposing scientific findings for the outcome with neither direction dominating.
- Insufficient evidence which indicates that the outcome has not been sufficiently studied.

Date: April 10, 2015	POLICY BRIEF HB15-1298	Page 2
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Specifically, the study found moderate support for:

- Decreased growth in exposed offspring.
- Attention problems in exposed offspring.
- Decreased IQ scores in exposed offspring.
- Reduced cognitive function in exposed offspring.
- Decreased academic ability of exposed offspring.

The review noted the potential bias in available reports (funded for purpose of finding adverse effects) and large gaps in research on pregnancy risks. The report assessed many statements and found mixed results, indicating that on many issues related to health risks during pregnancy, there is a great deal of uncertainty.

Some areas where mixed evidence was found include relationships between maternal marijuana use during pregnancy and:

- Birth defects,
- Preterm delivery, or
- Decreased or low birth weight.

About this Summary

This summary was prepared by Health District of Northern Larimer County staff to assist the Health District Board of Directors in determining whether to take an official stand on various health-related issues. The Health District is a special district of the northern two-thirds of Larimer County, Colorado, supported by local property tax dollars and governed by a publicly elected five-member board. The Health District provides medical, mental health, dental, preventive and health planning services to the communities it serves. For more information about this summary or the Health District, please contact Dan Sapienza, Policy Coordinator, at (970) 224-5209, or e-mail at dsapienza@healthdistrict.org.