
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6915

AN ACT CONCERNING CANNABIS USE PREVENTION EFFORTS RELATED TO YOUTH.

SUMMARY

This bill makes various changes affecting cannabis and substance use prevention and related funding.

For FYs 24 through 28, it increases, from 25% to 30%, the share of revenue from the state cannabis tax (see BACKGROUND) directed to the Prevention and Recovery Services Fund. It correspondingly decreases the percentage directed to the General Fund, from 15% to 10% in FYs 24-26 and 10% to 5% in FYs 27-28. By law, the rest of the tax revenue for these years goes to the Social Equity and Innovation Fund.

Existing law requires that moneys from the Prevention and Recovery Services Fund be used for substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery services and collecting and analyzing substance use data. The bill specifies that these services may include, among other things:

1. youth cannabis use prevention services by (a) local advisory councils on drug use and prevention established under federal law, (b) regional behavioral health action organizations, or (c) youth service bureaus (see BACKGROUND) and
2. developing a public awareness campaign on the mental and physical health risks of youth cannabis use and cannabis use during pregnancy.

Existing law allows the Alcohol and Drug Policy Council (ADPC) co-chairpersons to create subcommittees. The bill specifically allows them to create subcommittees on substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery. It allows these groups to collaborate with a science and engineering academy or higher education institution in the state to examine effective efforts in these matters.

Lastly, the bill requires the ADPC, by January 1, 2024, to establish a cannabis health review panel of members jointly chosen by the co-chairpersons. The panel must examine the effects of cannabis use, including (1) overdose by young people, (2) episodes of psychosis in people who use it, and (3) the impact of higher potencies on the developing brain. The panel must annually report its findings to the council starting by January 1, 2025.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023, and the tax provisions apply to taxes due on or after that date.

BACKGROUND

State Cannabis Tax

Connecticut imposes a state tax on retail sales of cannabis, cannabis plant material, and cannabis edible products by a cannabis retailer, hybrid retailer, or micro-cultivator, with certain exceptions (such as sales for medical use). The tax rate is based on the product's type and total THC reflected on its label.

Regional Behavioral Health Action Organizations (RBHAOs)

By law, the state's five contracted RBHAOs are responsible for (1) behavioral health planning, education, and promotion; (2) coordinating behavioral health issues prevention; and (3) advocacy for behavioral health needs and services within their respective mental health regions (CGS § 17a-484f).

Youth Service Bureaus

By law, youth service bureaus coordinate community-based services that provide prevention and intervention programs for delinquent, pre-delinquent, pregnant, parenting, and troubled youths referred to them by schools, police, and juvenile courts, among others (CGS § 10-19m).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 37 Nay 0 (03/27/2023)