



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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Press Release

DA Morrissey, Coalitions provide towns With resources to handle influx of pot

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Presenters at the May seminar were, from left, Asst. DA Jennifer Rowe, Needham coalition head Carol Reed, Weymouth Substance Abuse coordinator Paul Williams, Mass Prevention Alliance President Heidi Heilman, Avon Coalition head Mark Talbot, Walpole Chief John Carmichael, Stoughton Coalition's Lyn Frano, Needham Health Dept. Director Tim MacDonald, Stoughton coalition's Stephanie Patton and Attorney John Scheft.

Police Chief John Carmichael was a key presenter and organizer of the training on implementing changes to the marijuana laws.

Medical marijuana is rolling out into local communities that are not always well prepared to handle its impact on public health and safety. A question on the fall ballot would to make the drug ubiquitous.

More than 200 municipal leaders, including 10 police chiefs, school administrators, elected officials and drug abuse prevention leaders from more than 20 Norfolk County communities attended a half-day seminar recently called The Impacts of Marijuana: Strategies to address related health, social and legal issues. The event was presented by Norfolk District Attorney Michael W. Morrissey in partnership with the substance abuse prevention coalitions of Avon, Needham, Stoughton and Weymouth, Walpole Police Chief John Carmichael and Attorney John Scheft.

"Colorado's legalization of marijuana has been a disaster for the people of that state, and it is important that Massachusetts communities be prepared for what is coming," District Attorney Morrissey said after the event. "Pueblo County Hospitals are working to repeal legalization there. Meanwhile, we have to prepare, at the very least, for broad use under the guise of medicine."

"Instead of decreasing underage use, now Colorado has about twice the national rate of users in every age range. The number of black-market seizures has gone up instead of down, the promised tax revenues have been cut by black market sales and disproportionate use of low-tax medical dispensaries instead of taxed retail," Morrissey said. "It has unfolded as the opponents feared and not as the proponents promised. And one way or the other, it's coming."

The May 13 seminar, held in donated space at the Bank of Canton, included model health regulations for dispensaries, K2, Spice and drug paraphernalia, checklists for local boards of health to correctly implement the law and information on home cultivation and how to prevent illegal diversion to children.