

COLORADO CANNABIS EDUCATION, RESEARCH, AND POLICY PROJECT

Twenty First Meeting of the Scientific Review Council (SRC)

MEETING OVERVIEW & MINUTES

November 20, 2025

ColoradoSPH Project Attendees: Greg Tung, Annie Collier, Ashley Brooks-Russell, Travis Leiker, Cathy Bradley, Daphna Rubin, Zachary Giano, Dana Dolecki, Neeloo Soleimanpour, Louis Leslie, Valerie Yim, Tianjing Li

Scientific Review Council Attendees: Chris Urbina, Joe Shacht, Lesley Brooks, Kent Hutchinson, Erica Wymore, Kennon Heard

Guests: James Corbett, Initium Health

Welcome and Introductions

The Scientific Review Council (SRC) convened on November 20, 2025, and the meeting was chaired by Drs. Cathy Bradley and Chris Urbina.

Members of the SRC, the scientific research core, education and evaluation team, and campaign partners were present. All attendees introduced themselves and confirmed no conflicts of interest.

The meeting agenda focused on legislative and funding updates, scientific progress and publications, education and evaluation activities, public awareness campaign performance, and a discussion regarding the definition of high-concentration THC.

Legislative, Operational, and Funding Updates

ColoradoSPH leadership reported that Colorado is facing an anticipated \$1 billion budget shortfall, and the Governor's proposed budget does not include earmarked funding for the Colorado Cannabis Education, Research, and Policy Project (CO CERP). Nor does the budget include public awareness work resulting from this research. Current funding remains secure through June 2026, but continuation beyond July 1, 2026, will depend on legislative action during the upcoming legislative session. The team reiterated the importance of delivering on the school's commitments and the value of our external partnerships – all of which will play a role as to whether the legislature renews funding or if it is ultimately pulled.

A key component of the school's funding advocacy is a legislative briefing scheduled for December 4, 2025, intended to engage Colorado House and Senate leaders, their staff, and other stakeholders to highlight program successes and statewide impact. Leadership noted that many original champions of HB21-1217 are no longer in office, requiring significant re-education of legislative partners. While uncertainty remains, there is cautious optimism that funding could be restored through budget negotiations and with the support of other allied organizations.

Scientific Team Updates

The scientific team provided updates on the ongoing scoping review, which serves as the foundation for research, policy analysis, and educational messaging. The literature search is updated annually, with a target refresh each September. The Tableau database currently contains 591 studies, with 64 additional studies slated for inclusion this cycle, bringing the total to approximately 650+ studies.

Work continues on several focused reviews. A systematic review examining the health effects of high-concentration THC products among older adults is underway, with studies categorized by medicinal or personal use, usage patterns and attitudes, and other health impacts. While gaps remain, the evidence base is growing and supports the need for continued work by ColoradoSPH and the team.

The team is also developing a major paper for the Annual Review of Public Health on the implementation of medical and recreational cannabis laws in the United States, reflecting the program's national leadership in this space.

Education, Evaluation, and Community Engagement

The education and evaluation team highlighted a range of collaborative projects. A motivational interviewing curriculum has been developed to help parents navigate difficult conversations about cannabis, emphasizing parenting styles, practical application, and guidance on when to seek professional support. This curriculum is regularly integrated with Tea on THC through social media, web content, and online dissemination.

Arts-based education efforts continue through the youth art curriculum, which was piloted in two high schools. Data have been collected and feedback is being incorporated, with final curriculum dissemination planned for February 2026. Twenty youth submissions were received, with six selected for inclusion in the 2026 public arts programming.

The next art exhibitions will be hosted at two sites in 2026: May 25–31 at the Center for Creativity in Fort Collins and June 5–27 at the Cottonwood Center for the Arts in Colorado Springs. Ten artists completed training, and four were selected for exhibition.

Perinatal education efforts have advanced significantly. A four-week chatbot tool has completed beta testing, with final revisions underway. A 40-page provider training program was reviewed by nine perinatal providers statewide, and the team is exploring CME accreditation. Dissemination to providers will occur through three events in 2026, and a professional manuscript is expected to be finalized by February 2026.

Community engagement remains strong, with nine education events conducted across Colorado. In addition, the research and education core have provided additional trainings and presentations at various national conferences including those in Oregon and Washington, D.C., reaching diverse populations and generating more than 2,000 in-person contacts.

Through collaboration with the Center for Health, Work & Environment (CHWE), Tea on THC materials are being incorporated into their existing outreach to employers who already

participate in the Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative. Three events have been completed, three more are scheduled, and a Health Links webinar is planned for April 20, 2026. Additional outreach is planned to school districts, construction and hospitality industries, and smaller municipalities.

Separate from the work of the scientific core, evaluation efforts are producing multiple manuscripts nearing submission, including studies on science-informed art exhibitions, high-concentration cannabis demographics, and pregnancy and cannabis use. A new sentiment analysis approach is being used to quantify qualitative responses and assess message effectiveness and behavior change. Goals for the next quarter include analyzing survey outcomes, preparing three new manuscripts, and revising the master survey instrument.

Provider education is a cornerstone of ColoradoSPH's work over the next 6 months. A five-part CE seminar series coordinated by Ashley Brooks-Russell is scheduled for January 29 and February 5, 12, 19, and 26.

Campaign Performance: Initium Health and Tea on THC

Initium Health reported substantial reach and engagement. The campaign has generated more than 51 million impressions through digital and community outreach. The Tea on THC website now averages 30,000 visitors per month, exceeding DARE's monthly traffic, with visitors from 62 of 64 Colorado counties and significant national reach. Top states include California, Texas, Florida, New York, Arizona, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Ohio.

The most visited landing pages focus on parents and mentors, pregnant women, and youth. Platform performance varies by audience, with Facebook most effective for pregnant women, Instagram for young adults, TikTok for youth ages 13–17, and Google for information-seeking users. TikTok has been the strongest platform for youth engagement, while Google Display and Search are outperforming benchmarks, including more than 166,000 impressions through search. Influencers are carefully vetted to counter normalization of cannabis use while avoiding association with cannabis brands. Ten community events were held between August and November.

High-Concentration THC Definition Discussion

The SRC engaged in an in-depth discussion of how to define high-concentration THC under HB21-1217. Members compared a dichotomous approach, which is simpler to communicate but insufficiently captures risk drivers, with a continuous approach, which better reflects real-world use and the scientific evidence despite being more complex.

The SRC reached consensus to recommend adopting a continuous approach, emphasizing that concentration exists on a spectrum and that higher concentration corresponds with higher risk. Members noted that most products in today's marketplace are already high concentration, making rigid cutoffs less meaningful. This framing aligns with current research, campaign evolution, and broader public health messaging, including the distinction between ingestion and smoking and the clear message that no amount of cannabis is safe during pregnancy.

Next steps include drafting the recommendation, circulating it to SRC members for feedback, and presenting it at the next meeting.

Closing

Members of the team expressed appreciation for the SRC's guidance and the continued work of the research, education, and campaign teams. Members emphasized the importance of sustained advocacy, timely publications, and strategic communication as funding decisions approach. The meeting was adjourned.