Welcome to the fifth newsletter from the Cannabis Research and Policy Project. Since the last newsletter, our team continues to update the scoping review of research studies. We are assessing 6,000 new publications from this past year. Studies that meet our inclusion criteria from the initial review will be added to the interactive evidence map. We are also conducting a detailed, systematic review of studies addressing high-concentration cannabis products and mental health. We will publish the findings later this year. Our next detailed review will be on studies addressing high-concentration cannabis and respiratory health outcomes.

In the initial scoping review of scientific studies, serious limitations of the literature were identified. Consequently, this past month, we gathered key researchers to develop recommendations to improve the standardization of methods, quality of research on cannabis, and the relevance of findings to today’s products. We will publish material developed at the workshop later this year.

Finally, we will be scheduling the next Scientific Review Council (SRC) meeting for July 2024 to provide an update on the ongoing reviews and activities of the educational campaign team. Information about the meeting will be available on the project website.

Note: We offer the reminder that our activities under HB 1317 are directed at high-concentration marijuana and THC concentrates and not at cannabis and THC generally. The scoping review available on our project website is subject to this specific focus. For those seeking information on marijuana and concentrates generally, there are general resources available, such as the CDC’s Marijuana and Public Health page and NIDA’s Cannabis (Marijuana) DrugFacts page. This report and the scope of our work under the charge of HB 1317 do not address cannabinoids other than THC.
Educational Campaign Updates:
The educational campaign team has made progress across five core project components in June.

1. Community Engagement: We held a series of motivational interviewing trainings for community members across June. We also collected feedback on those sessions to enhance future trainings and content on this topic area. Our community engagement team also attended several community events related to Juneteenth and Pride Fest. At these events, team members engaged the public to raise awareness about the overall educational campaign, pass out promotional items, and recruit participants into the program evaluation survey.

2. Partnerships: The Colorado State University partner team proposed marketing concepts aimed at reaching young adults aged 18 to 25 in Larimer and Weld counties. The materials focus on positive coping strategies as an alternative to cannabis use. The Clinic Chat, LLC partner team launched a Beta version of the chatbot, and various team members tested the technology and reviewed the content for accuracy. The chatbot will be housed on the educational campaign website’s home page.

3. Initium Health: Initium Health continued to make progress on their seven workstreams: brand identity, video production, campaign website, web-based curricula, social media and state-wide media, art exhibitions, and a podcast. The Initium team presented the final branding concept of “The Tea on THC” campaign to the Scientific Review Council (SRC). The SRC approved this concept, and Initium Health moved forward with building out the campaign website, marketing materials, filmography, and social media strategy. The Initium Health team also continued to develop the web-based curriculum and engaged an illustrator and designer to create the online content. Initium Health also began recording “The Tea on THC” podcast, which will focus on the topic of high concentration THC cannabis, the HB 1317 legislation, and personal stories related to high concentration cannabis products. Lastly, the Initium Health team supported the launch of the two art exhibitions with websites, marketing materials, local media coverages, and materials to promote the survey.

4. Art Exhibition: The Grow Up ((Bell Projects, youth show) and Hear/Say (BRDG Gallery, main show) art exhibitions opened on June 7th and June 14th, respectively. The exhibitions will each be open for one month and there will be a closing reception at the BRDG Gallery for the Hear/Say exhibition on July 14th.

5. Evaluation: The program evaluation team launched surveys to assess what visitors learned from the ongoing art exhibitions, as well as to gather feedback from the participating artists on their experiences throughout the art making process. The team also distributed surveys at community events, such as Juneteenth and Pride Fest, to get responses from the general public on their knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors surrounding high concentration cannabis products. We also launched a broader panel-based survey, in conjunction with the Initium Health evaluation team, to maximize our baseline understanding of the topic of high concentration cannabis before we reach campaign saturation among the target audiences.