**Meeting Minutes**

**HB 21-1317 Fifteenth Meeting of the Scientific Review Council**

**March 12, 2024; 11:00 am – 1:00 pm MT**

**General Remarks and Welcome:**

* Dr. Chris Urbina, Chair of the Scientific Review Council (SRC), called to order the fifteenth meeting of the SRC on March 12, 2024, at 11:00 am MT.

**Scientific Review Council Introductions and Update on Conflicts of Interest:**

* The Chair conducted a roll call for both the Council and the Colorado School of Public Health (SPH) project team members.
* The following Council members were present and introduced:
* Chris Urbina
* Joseph Schacht
* Kennon Heard
* Kent Hutchison
* Greg Kinney
* Archana Shrestha
* The following Council members were absent:
* Lesley Brooks, with advanced notice and apologies
* Susan Calcaterra, with advanced notice and apologies
* Paula Riggs, with advanced notice and apologies
* Kelly Knupp, with advanced notice and apologies
* Erica Wymore, with advanced notice and apologies

The following SPH team members were present and introduced:

* Jonathan Samet
* Greg Tung
* Sam Wang
* Tianjing Li
* Ashley Brooks-Russell (with advanced notice of late arrival)
* Louis Leslie
* Jean-Pierre Oberste
* Meghan Buran
* Neeloo Soleimanpour
* Annie Collier
* Colleen Keenan
* The following SPH team members were absent:
* Lisa Bero, with advanced notice and apologies
* Valerie Yim, with advanced notice and apologies
* Christi Piper, with advanced notice and apologies
* Paige Buchanan-Hall, with advanced notice and apologies
* Thanitsara Rittiphairoj, with advanced notice and apologies
* Jenn Leiferman, with advanced notice and apologies
* Charlene Barrientos Ortiz, with advanced notice and apologies
* Changes to COI forms for any Council members

No questions for Chair Chris Urbina.

**Review of Agenda, Meeting Minutes, Charge to the Colorado SPH, and Recommendations to the SRC:**

* Chair Urbina reminded everyone in attendance that meeting minutes and the response to SRC recommendations are available on the project website under the resources tab.
* Chair Urbina reviewed the agenda with the Council.
* Agenda shown on screen for the panelists (Council and Colorado SPH) and public attendees.
* Dr. Jonathan Samet highlighted that we added a high-level summary of the meeting discussion in addition to the meeting minutes. Both items are posted on our team website.

No questions for Chair Urbina.

**Overview Progress from the Cannabis Research & Policy Project:**

* Dr. Greg Tung mentioned that the focus of today’s meeting is on the policy recommendations and the education campaign, but he provided a quick overall progress report on the project as well.
* Dr. Tung highlighted the development of a monthly newsletter and project timeline that will be uploaded to our website where updates will take place regularly to provide more consistent and detailed external communication updates from both the administrative and research core in addition to the educational campaign core. Dr. Tung encouraged the attendees to submit feedback on our website regarding the newsletter.
* Dr. Tung also provided a high-level overview of ongoing reports that the cannabis research and policy team has under development including the update of our overall scoping review and systematic reviews on mass media and behavioral interventions and modern modalities in behavioral interventions, which will be a resource for our communication and education team. Dr. Tung mentioned that the team also has reviews in progress relating to mental health outcomes and respiratory health outcomes. The team is developing reports on funding bias and understanding the implications of the current state of research.
* Dr. Tung previewed the policy paper and the team’s effort to focus on policy translation where we are taking the next step from all the review activities and thinking about what the policy recommendation implications of that are.
* Dr. Tung described the methods workshop the Cannabis Research & Policy Project Team is planning. The first round of invitations was delivered to a broad array of experts. The event is scheduled to take place this June in Boulder, CO. The intent is to generate recommendations to improve standardization and methodological rigor as we saw some lack of consistency and opportunities for improvement in the methodological rigor.
* Dr. Tung touched on the scheduled continuing medical education event that is targeted at pediatric and OBGYN providers. This will take place on May 15th in collaboration with Children’s Hospital
* Dr. Tung emphasized the collaborative relationship we are building with the department of psychiatry at the University of Colorado School of Medicine to plan additional educational activities and develop resources and trainings for mental health providers related to high-concentration cannabis.
  + Planning a CME Event for the next fiscal year and potential partner with the department to develop broader communication materials for K-12 educators.

Questions and Answers:

* Chair Urbina asked if the newsletter will be posted to the website and if the evidence map will continue to be available.
  + Dr. Tung answered that the newsletter will be posted to the website for public access and the evidence map dashboard is still available. Updates will be made to the dashboard as the search from the review team is completed.

No further questions for Dr. Tung.

**Policy Paper & SRC Discussion on Policy Recommendations**

* Chair Urbina highlighted the research team’s effort to assess the national landscape and what is happening in different states in regard to policies relating to cannabis use.
* Dr. Samet discussed the reasoning for developing a policy paper, largely due to the limited evidence on the effects of high-concentration cannabis product use as noted in our report on the findings of the scoping review and the serious limitations in the literature. We are trying to address the limitations through the workshop and the secondary systematic review on mental health that Dr. Tung mentioned earlier. The team conducted additional analysis reviews and examined the national landscape of policy measures in place. The paper discusses how to move forward in the absence of evidence indicating the need for being precautionary, particularly with those populations who are most susceptible and vulnerable (e.g., period of pregnancy, early life, and all the years through adolescence into young adulthood).
* Dr. Samet explained that we mapped the national landscape with the assistance of National Conference of State Legislatures and the team offered general guidance around being precautionary than more specific options around the nation. The intent is to post this report on the project’s website for consideration and hopefully feud as providing a useful context or background should decisions be made by the legislature to move forward with any particular measures around high-concentration marijuana and THC concentrates.
* Previously, the Cannabis Research & Policy Team sent this paper to the SRC asking for comments and again, this does not need the SRC’s approval for submission but the project team is asking for their knowledge and input.
* Chair Urbina explained the SRC’s responsibility to review the paper and asked the SRC if they want to agree with the recommendation written in the Cannabis Research & Policy Team’s policy paper with no prioritization or highlights? Or do we want to write a separate piece that prioritizes a list of recommendations from the SRC.

Questions, Comments, and Answers

* Dr. Kennon Heard discussed that the science behind the medical utility of high concentration cannabis use was low and that should be emphasized because it is difficult to present policy recommendations around medical use of it when the science behind it is non-existent or varies.
* Dr. Greg Kinney echoed Dr. Heard’s comment and asked is there scientific evidence that we are missing that other states are using to make conclusions on cut offs?
  + Dr. Samet mentioned the team’s research on Vermont and Connecticut’s cut-offs and their determinations were made based on expert opinion.
* Chair Urbina provided some possible recommendations that the SRC can make. Chair Urbina reiterated that we are to look at the evidence to say if there is benefit or harm related to high-concentration use and we’ve concluded the potential risk, but we have uncertainty of scientific evidence. Chair Urbina explained his rationale behind bullet number four based on looking at many websites that discusses cannabis concentrations, they all have fairly limited safety recommendations listed. They primarily focus on pets, children, pregnant women, individuals breastfeeding and avoiding operating heavy machinery, but in general the recommendations are limited although they have lots of information about the potential benefit without scientific evidence. Again, Chair Urbina asked the SRC if they wanted to make any recommendations stronger or their own.

Questions, Comments, and Answers

* Dr. Kinney would like to highlight the real-time monitoring recommendation and asked if we can get some feedback from those who are using the products and may be experiencing negative effects.
* Dr. Heard agrees with Dr. Kinney and added that we need to increase product labelling and education for the users.
* Dr. Kinney mentioned some recommendations Dr. Sam Wang made when cannabis use was legalized regarding the packaging (e.g., making the products not visible) and protection from kids that should be emphasized and followed.
* Dr. Joseph Schacht agreed with Dr. Kinney’s comment about real-time monitoring and asked for additional research funding to study the effects of the products.
* Dr. Samet added that the methods workshop should address the surveillance issue that we are facing with the hope that research methods need to be continually updated and we need ways to do that, which will be one of the focuses of the workshop.
* Dr. Kinney asked if any progress has been made on the reporting new products have to go through. Is the restriction of sharing that data still necessary for the current market? With this information we can compare what potential harms are coming out of the market and look at a quarter-by-quarter assessment of what products are going into the market.
  + Drs. Wang and Tung are not aware of any change for public access. Dr. Tung mentioned that there is more detailed data available in the Department of Revenue that is not publicly available, which aligns with the policy recommendation about better monitoring. Amendment 64 protects the industry, and it is illegal to share that specific data.
* Chair Urbina asked for the research team to explore with the marijuana enforcement division to see if that data could be incorporated or made public.
* Chair Urbina noted that at this time, the SRC is not enthusiastic about making policy recommendations at this point but there are a few recommendations the Cannabis Research & Policy Project Team are making that the SRC wants to reenforce. Chair Urbina would like the SRC to consider providing recommendations regarding higher taxation or sales limits.

No further questions for Dr. Samet and Chair Urbina.

**Educational Campaign Update:**

* Dr. Ann Collier provided an overview of the progress from the education campaign and how the team plans to disseminate it to the Colorado public with the focus to decrease consumption of high-concentration cannabis use among youth, young adults, pregnant, and post-partum people through an integrated multimodal communication and education campaign.
* Dr. Collier discussed the collaboration with several people throughout Colorado and the ongoing involvement of our community partners and their engagement with how we deliver this information. We continue to meet with our community adult and youth advisory groups in Denver, Pueblo, and the San Luis Valley.
  + The campaign also holds bimonthly community engagement workshops, but they need a more rapid way to communicate what is happening to receive feedback on the campaign content and activities. Therefore, the campaign team developed a rapid response team involving a subgroup of community engagement folks and SRC members to be in touch with the Initium Health team. The intent is to receive feedback on developed materials and ensure that we are developing materials in a sensitive manner both in terms of cultural competency and social justice.
* Dr. Collier reviewed each of the projects that the education campaign is conducting including the target audience, anticipated deliverables, relevant dates, evaluation metric, and key site contacts for each project with the hope that each activity will be expanded in the future if funding is provided.
  + The first project reviewed was the marketing content development that is contracted through Initium Health. They are developing the branding for the logo, making videos, written products, and educational modules using the drafts of the content the educational campaign will provide by the end of April. Initium Health has their own evaluation metrics in addition to our evaluation measures.
  + The second project is the art exhibition, titled “Hear, Say This!”. The contract is in place, and it is progressing well. A printed catalog will be developed and in parallel with display panels with educational information. The event will take place on June 14th at the BRDG Gallery.
  + The third project is also through Initium Health who will help produce content for a social media campaign to be distributed through Snapchat, YouTube, podcasts, and social media influencers. Initium Health will also assist with developing a website to house our educational campaign content.
  + The fourth project is contracted through Initium Health to develop an integrated media campaign to be disseminated in various forms like print, television, radio, and social media. The developing and helping to disseminate promotional marketing materials for the program, March is busy developing the strategy. April would be the content drafts and then it would be disseminated in May, June.
  + The fifth project is partnered with faculty members in the Colorado School of Public Health to develop trainings for motivational interviewing and those who want an in-depth training on how to hold conversations with vulnerable populations about using too much high concentration cannabis.
  + The sixth project is partnering with CSU and UNC to reach college aged individuals using screening and educational material and resources to promote through their Office of Health Promotion. Also, they will develop mindfulness trainings. The hope is for this material to be developed for a larger audience as funding is available.
  + The seventh project is developing chat based chatbots that are artificially intelligent and using a language processing model. The plan is for people to have conversations both on our website and delivered through their telephone or WhatsApp. This content is to be developed in English and Spanish.
  + The eighth project is partnered with CSU faculty member – Nate Riggs to target college students and emerging adults who are in the Fort Collins/Larimer County area using focus groups for content development and social marketing campaigns.
  + The last project with partners with the department of psychiatry to organize a continuing medical education event for mental health providers but also target educators who work with youth and parents. Develop content that would be available for educators from toolkits and motivational interviewing.

Questions and Answers

* Chair Urbina asked if there is a need for SRC input on the rapid content drafts being developed.
  + Dr. Collier mentioned that we plan to have SRC input on the drafts and material submitted to our vendors to produce.
* Chair Urbina asked how the art exhibition will reach those who may not be an art enthusiast.
  + Dr. Collier answered that publicity through the art venue and Initium Health will promote the ongoing exhibition. The exhibition will hopefully travel throughout the state to reach a boarder audience. The exhibition will also expand to include youth artists for a youth art exhibition in four different high schools throughout the Denver area.
    - Dr. Collier mentioned that there is a lot of interest in the youth population, and we hope to use a peer-to-peer training technique to reach this population effectively.
* Chair Urbina asked if the campaign has asked advocacy groups to promote the social media campaign.
  + Dr. Collier noted that we are aware of those groups, and we plan to collaborate with them.
* Dr. Heard asked how we plan to conduct the evaluation metrics specifically relating to their awareness of cannabis.
  + Dr. Collier answered that we have an evaluation survey and depending on the intervention, we will have intervention specific questions. Any partner that we are involved with will use the same evaluation tools to ensure the same metrics are measured at each intervention. We plan to have iPads available at the events to receive feedback immediately.
  + Chair Urbina asked if the SRC would like to see the evaluation survey and provide their feedback on the anticipated questions that the evaluators plan to ask before it is implemented.
  + Dr. Collier said that it has not been finalized yet, but she would be open to feedback from the SRC if they would like to review it.
* Chair Urbina commented that interviewing and holding conversations between youth and parents is a universal skill when having to discuss high concentration cannabis use, vaping, tobacco, sexual activity, etc. And it should be a tool that is available in all school systems.
  + Dr. Collier agreed and mentioned the partnership with the Psychiatry department and their work with educators across the state. We hope to develop trainings that we can provide educators in English and Spanish.
* Chair Urbina asked how the chatbot will work if a question is asked and an answer is not available.
  + Dr. Collier explained that the chatbot will reach out to the tech team to provide a response. This is a closed system and it would provide the information that we produced from the toolkits. This system should not link to external sources, like a google search. Dr. Collier can provide examples of how the chatbot will operate before the chatbot goes live.
* Dr. Archana Shrestha asked how we are addressing young adults who are not in college, rather those who fall in the high school age range.
  + Dr. Collier answered that we are targeting high school students through the art exhibit, and we have a toolkit. Initium health will also disseminate this material and through social media. The information was already delivered to four different schools using games with prizes and it was well received by the youth audience.
* Chair Urbina asked how the material will be presented to the target audience of pregnant, parents, and post-partum populations.
  + Dr. Collier answered that Initium Health will help make sure those populations receive this information using their campaign.
  + Ms. Colleen Keenan echoed that we will plan to reach more high schools in the future and consider partnering with health clinics and healthcare providers to distribute the available resources.
* Dr. Schacht commented that he had a conversation with Dr. Matt Mishkind. He was concerned about hosting a CME event in fiscal year 2024, but it will take place in fiscal year 2025. They were excited about the collaboration to discuss the effects of cannabis use. There is interest in expanding this to a larger mental health provider audience outside of Colorado.
  + Dr. Tung echoed that if we push this into the next fiscal year then we can create a larger event and impact.
* Dr. Kinney asked how we can create material that continues to be relevant as we continue to get more scientific evidence that may adjust our message.
  + Dr. Collier highlighted that this is a challenge, but we hope by receiving community feedback then this will allow us to create current material of interest. We hope to receive funding annually to continually update our material.
  + Dr. Kinney also recommended that we normalize using citations and scientific studies in the material to gauge longer term interest.
* Chair Urbina asked what the educational campaign needs to move forward.
  + Dr. Collier is asking for approval of the material presented today and to ensure that there are no concerns at this time with the projects that are taking place. The education campaign would like the SRC support as we continue to progress in the campaign.
  + Dr. Shrestha provided her approval.
  + Dr. Kinney asked if the SRC will see the material produced by Initium Health. Dr. Kinney is happy to participate in the rapid response feedback requests.
    - Dr. Collier said that members of the SRC can attend their planning meetings, and she will present information that Initium Health develops at our next SRC meeting.
    - Dr. Samet said we have contacted individual SRC members who have expertise with specific populations and then the broader ideas are presented at these SRC meetings. Dr. Samet asked if this is how the SRC wants to continue proceeding?
    - Chair Urbina believes this is an acceptable approach and has no problem with proceeding this way.
      * Drs. Kinney, Shrestha, and Schacht provided their approval today.

No further questions or comments.

**Next Steps from the Cannabis Research and Policy Team:**

* Chair Urbina and Dr. Samet appreciated the feedback from the group and the hard work from the team.
* Dr. Samet told the team to look for a poll to determine when the next meeting will be to discuss the educational campaign's progress.
  + Dr. Collier believes a meeting in April will be necessary.
  + Dr. Samet noted that we will consider an in-person SRC meeting in the near future and all are invited to attend the art exhibition and the CME event that the team is hosting.

No further questions or comments for Chair Urbina and Dr. Samet.

**Next Meeting Timing and Closing Remarks:**

* No final questions or comments.
* Meeting Adjourned 12:37 pm (MT).