

Beach Cities Health District Position on proposed City of Redondo Beach Cannabis Ordinance

Beach Cities Health District Policy Position on Cannabis as adopted by the Board of Directors:

Beach Cities Health District (BCHD) strives to promote the health and well-being of all members of our community. Health organizations play an important role in educating the public on the harms associated with marijuana in all forms, as we continue to see the perceived risk of marijuana decline. Much like alcohol and tobacco, marijuana is still illegal for young adults under the age of 21.

- In order for adolescents to reach their full potential, Beach Cities Health District recommends youth under the age of 21 abstain entirely from marijuana use in order to protect their developing brains and optimize healthy brain development.
- The Beach Cities Health District does not support the introduction of "cannabis clubs" or medical marijuana dispensaries.
- The Beach Cities Health District does not support the introduction of marijuana retail licenses.

Background:

BCHD was invited to participate on the City Manager's task force to review cannabis retail in the City of Redondo Beach and participated on the sub-committee tasked with crafting the recommendations. BCHD advocated for: maximum distances from middle and high schools, restricted zoning resulting in the exclusion of cannabis retail from the South Bay Galleria and the Pier and – if an outright moratorium on retail marijuana was not possible – a limited number of retail licenses. We appreciate the thoughtful process that City staff engaged in.

In 2019, with the support of the cities of Redondo Beach, Hermosa Beach and Manhattan Beach, as well as local school districts, BCHD applied for and was awarded a federal Drug-Free Communities Grant. The two substances of focus: alcohol and marijuana. Through this grant funding, BCHD's Youth Advisory Committee continues to advise us that the acceptability and accessibility of substances in the Beach Cities through social norms, advertisements and the retail environment inundate them as they move about the community. Recent PhotoVoice projects on vaping and alcohol use in the Beach Cities demonstrated that even when retailers of these substances are in compliance with local ordinances, they are still ubiquitous, and influential on students of all ages.

In the Beach Cities, the current marijuana use among Beach Cities 11th graders is greater than Los Angeles County as a whole and two-thirds of Redondo Beach 11th graders perceive that it is "easy" to obtain marijuana if they wanted it. Marijuana addiction is higher for those who begin using before the age of 18 and developing brains are especially susceptible to the harmful effects of marijuana. Studies indicate

that young adults who live in neighborhoods with more medical marijuana dispensaries use marijuana more frequently than those who do not.

All three Beach Cities issued moratoriums on recreational cannabis dispensaries within city boundaries after the passage of Proposition 64. Currently, cannabis proponents are circulating initiative petitions that would allow dispensaries in Redondo Beach and Manhattan Beach. If these efforts gather enough petition signatures, the city councils have the option to adopt the initiative into law or put it on the ballot for the next regular election. The Councils are not allowed to change the language of the initiatives, and in both petitions, the initiative would allow for three state-licensed dispensaries in each city.

BCHD Recommendation:

BCHD is not in favor of establishing a cannabis retail environment in our cities. However, if the only choice is between Redondo Beach crafting its own closely defined ordinance or a broad initiative that removes local control, then we support Redondo Beach and trust that they will keep BCHD involved in this process and that they will keep the health and safety of all residents – especially our youth – at the forefront of their decision-making process.