Underage Marijuana Use

The Eugene Springfield Prevention Coalition’s mission is to proactively address substance abuse in our community through the promotion of positive norms and community standards, healthy youth development, advocacy, and education.

After alcohol, Marijuana is the most commonly abused drug among Lane County youth, with 18.3% of 11th graders reporting regular use. The Eugene Springfield Prevention Coalition’s prevention work is shaped by the following principles:

**Retail marijuana is illegal for youth and young adults under 21 years old.**

**Research indicates that marijuana may hurt the developing brain.**
For youth who smoke marijuana, the average age that they smoked for the first time is 12 years old. Research indicates that early and regular marijuana use can have a profound impact on the developing adolescent brain, including increased risk for addiction, attention deficits, reduced IQ, and reduced executive functioning.

**Marijuana can lead to negative health and social consequences for youth**
Youth who smoke marijuana are at increased risk for poor school performance, unplanned pregnancy, driving under the influence and higher levels of delinquency.

**The Eugene Springfield Prevention Coalition will use the following strategies to reduce youth use:**

1. Educate youth, parents, schools and communities about marijuana. Ensure that education strategies are effective and culturally relevant.
   a. Partner with schools to provide education to parents & youth about the dangers of youth marijuana use.
   b. Increase community-wide prevention/health messaging using models such as the Positive Community Norms approach.
   c. Address misconceptions about level of marijuana use and level of harm of marijuana for youth.

2. Reduce underage access to marijuana.
   a. Reduce youth access to marijuana from retail sources by preventing sales to minors.
   b. Reduce youth access to marijuana from social sources (i.e. family and friends).

3. Reduce promotion of marijuana to minors.
   a. Restrict youth friendly products and marketing to youth.

4. Ensure fair and appropriate consequences for underage marijuana users and enabling adults.
   a. Support effective minor in possession strategy.
   b. Support appropriate and consistent school policies regarding marijuana use and enforcement of and visible consequences for public smoking and providing to minors.

5. Promote community wide healthy attitudes and behaviors regarding marijuana use.
References:

1. 2014, Oregon Student Wellness Survey
2. 2014, Oregon Student Wellness Survey