



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: HEALTH

File #: 19-990

Board Meeting Date: 10/22/2019

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Louise F. Rogers, Chief, San Mateo County Health
Scott Gilman, Director, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services

Subject: Ordinance to Add Chapter 4.120 to Title 4 of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code to Restrict the Advertising of Alcoholic Beverages and Cannabis to Youth

RECOMMENDATION:

Introduction of an ordinance adding Chapter 4.120 to Title 4 of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code to restrict the advertising of alcoholic beverages and cannabis to youth, and waive the reading of the ordinance in its entirety.

BACKGROUND:

Youth surveys have consistently shown alcohol and cannabis to be the most widely used drugs at all adolescent age levels. The 2017-18 California Healthy Kids Survey showed that 18.6% of 11th graders in San Mateo County were current users of alcohol and that 17% were cannabis users. A significant portion of those who use alcohol and cannabis initiated use by age 12.

Use of alcohol and other drugs have significant impacts on youth academic outcomes. Of the 4,841 student suspensions in San Mateo County during the 2017-18 academic calendar, 941 were related to illicit drugs. Of the 27 expulsions in the County, 14 were related to illicit drugs. A student's absence in school could result in lower grades, compromised ability to pursue advanced education and training, less employment opportunities, and ultimately affect access to health care and health promoting services.

Alcohol, cannabis, and other drug use also impact healthcare costs. The Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD) reports that alcohol-related emergency room (ER) visits make up 76% of alcohol or other drug (AOD) ER visits. This means alcohol-related emergency room visits make up the vast majority of ER visits when compared to other substances. Between 2008 and 2014, OSHPD reported an upward trend in the rate of AOD-related ER visits for 18-24-year olds in San Mateo County.

According to the Office of Traffic Safety, in 2016 there were 26 accidents in San Mateo County that resulted in deaths or injuries in which a driver under 21 years old had been drinking.

Media has an impact on AOD use. According to National Institutes of Health Publication 95-3743, exposure to alcohol advertising increases alcohol consumption and that, conversely, alcohol counter-advertising (use of mass media to promote healthy behaviors) reduces alcohol consumption. The same research showed that the imposition of an alcohol advertising ban reduces alcohol consumption.

San Mateo County-specific data (Youth Cannabis Education Campaign Baseline Survey, San Mateo County, 2019) shows that youth who have used cannabis are more likely to be aware of cannabis-related ads than youth who have not tried cannabis.

DISCUSSION:

Staff of the Behavioral Health and Recovery Services Community Health Promotion Unit canvassed the 34 known billboards in unincorporated areas of San Mateo County in Spring 2019. Twenty-four of the billboards are located in the Middlefield Road area of unincorporated Redwood City. Five of the billboards were found to contain ads that promote alcohol or cannabis. An additional six locations in unincorporated San Mateo County were identified.

The following are the key provisions of the proposed ordinance:

- It applies only in the unincorporated areas of San Mateo County.
- It prohibits any person, business, or retailer to place or maintain, or cause to be placed or maintained, any advertising of Alcoholic Beverages or Cannabis, Cannabis Products, or Cannabis Activity on a billboard that is within 1,000 feet of a child care center, library, playground, public park, or school.
- It does not apply to the display of public service messages or similar messages cautioning against the use of Alcoholic Beverages, Cannabis, Cannabis Products, or Cannabis Activity, or that are designed to encourage minors to refrain from using or purchasing such substances.
- Enforcement of the ordinance would be through the imposition of administrative penalties. The prosecuting attorney has discretion to prosecute as an infraction, as the interests of justice require.
- Owners or operators of child-sensitive businesses or the owner or lessee of a billboard may submit a petition to the County Planning and Building Department to request a review to determine whether a specific billboard is permitted to display advertising of alcohol or cannabis.
- It would go into effect 30 days after the ordinance's final approval.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None