



## San Francisco Department of Public Health

Greg Wagner  
Acting Director of Health

City and County of San Francisco  
London N. Breed  
Mayor

### **Health Department launches youth cannabis campaign to support healthy decision making New “Truth or Nah” ads to appear inside Muni buses**

#### For Immediate Release

Contact: Veronica Vien, San Francisco Department of Public Health  
415-554-2566, [veronica.vien@sfdph.org](mailto:veronica.vien@sfdph.org)

**San Francisco, CA (November 26, 2018)** -- The San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) announced today the “Truth or Nah” youth cannabis campaign in response to the state’s change in cannabis laws, which made adult-use cannabis legal for adults.

The campaign is designed to provide facts to youth, and dispel myths, so that they can make well-informed decisions. The campaign is focused on reaching diverse groups and will appear on interior ads on Muni buses in English, Spanish, and Chinese. It includes a website (<https://www.truthornahsf.org/>) and multilingual posters and postcards at select locations throughout the City, including at San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) middle and high school sites.

Truth or Nah encourages youth to “ask the right questions” and “find the right answers.” This Q&A theme features three colors -- green, blue, and yellow -- reflecting three answers -- truth, meh and nah, respectively — answering the questions. By providing reliable facts, the campaign intends to reduce the negative consequences associated with cannabis consumption for young people, and encourage the prevention or delay of cannabis use.

“The Health Department has a responsibility to make resources available for young people so they can make well-informed decisions,” said Dr. Tomas Aragon, San Francisco Health Officer. “Once they have all the facts, we know they are smart enough to decide what is best for them when it comes to cannabis consumption. We are here to support them.”

The campaign was developed with the help of SFUSD middle and high school students. The SFUSD 2016-2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that by 12th grade, 20.5 percent of youth in San Francisco reported using cannabis in the past 30 days.

On November 8, 2016, voters in California passed Proposition 64, legalizing the use, possession, transportation and retail sale of cannabis for adults 21 or older. To be clear, it is still illegal to consume cannabis products in public. The law came into effect throughout the state on January 1, 2017.



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Myths about cannabis among peers and online can make getting real, honest answers difficult for teens. The Health Department's campaign is based in facts, and was developed with research, data and the input of clinical experts, as well as youth. Feedback from youth suggested the campaign take a harm reduction approach, rather than tell them what to do. Therefore, as part of the first phase of this multi-year campaign, SFDPH is publishing two messages to inform youth about the health impacts of cannabis. They are:

- While smoking weed may not have the same risks as using synthetic drugs, it's not completely safe. Like cigarettes, smoking cannabis can damage your lungs.
- It's harder to control the timing and effect of weed that is swallowed. Edibles can contain more THC than you would get from smoking cannabis, and can kick in when you don't expect it. People sometimes eat enough to get poisoned before they feel any effects.

An additional eight questions and answers will incorporate messages to increase awareness of cannabis effects and offer youth tools for critical thinking and decision-making support.

To amplify campaign efforts and expand reach to City youth, SFDPH partnered with the Harm Reduction Coalition to develop a training program for SFDPH and SFUSD program staff and clinicians who work with youth.

"SFUSD staff are grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with the Department of Public Health," said Gentle Blythe, Deputy Superintendent for Strategic Partnerships and Communication, SFUSD. "It's more imperative than ever that young people understand the potential dangers of cannabis use. Our health educators and social workers are now better prepared to utilize harm reduction strategies thanks to this campaign."

SFDPH continues to work closely with the SFUSD and other critical community partners to promote positive youth development for the City's diverse population of young people. In an effort to reach outside of schools, phase two will include social media advertisements on Instagram and video PSAs. Multilingual postcards and posters also can be found at clinics within the San Francisco Health Network including Children's Health Center, Family Health Center, nine Community Health Programs for Youth sites, and two Hope SF locations.

There are still many unanswered questions about the short- and long-term effects of cannabis use. If youth are not able to find the answer to their question, they are encouraged to ask us on [truthornahsf.org](http://truthornahsf.org). Meanwhile, more cannabis information is available at the California Department of Public Health's [Let's Talk Cannabis](#) campaign.

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### About San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH)

The mission of the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) is to protect and promote the health of all San Franciscans. SFDPH strives to achieve its mission through the work of two main divisions – the San Francisco Health Network and the Population Health Division. The San Francisco Health Network is a community of top-rated clinics, hospitals and programs that serves more than 100,000 people annually at sites such as Castro Mission, Chinatown, and Southeast health centers, Zuckerberg San Francisco General and Laguna Honda Hospital and Rehabilitation Center. With a broad community focus, the goal of the Population Health Division is to ensure that San Franciscans have optimal health and wellness at every stage of life. To achieve this, the Division is comprised of branches dedicated to core public health services, such as health protection and promotion, disease and injury prevention, disaster preparedness and response, and environmental health services.

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