Quebec's public not-for-profit distribution system

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North American Cannabis Summit, Los Angeles
Québec, Canada?
INSPQ’s mandate: expert support to the Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux du Québec and the regional public health authorities

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What If The Pot Industry Was, Like, Just A Big Nonprofit, Man?

Pot is good, but maybe not if it’s being aggressively pushed by profit-minded companies whose only concern is getting you to smoke as much as possible. As Canada prepares to legalize weed, experts are pushing a different model.

Source: https://www.fastcompany.com/40428568/what-if-the-pot-industry-was-like-just-a-big-nonprofit-man
Outline

1. Mass commercialization of cannabis and public health

2. Quebec’s public not-for-profit distribution system and public health
1. Mass commercialization and public health

Public health logic

- Global consumption reduction
- Frequent and intense consumption reduction
- Other high-risk consumptions reductions (products, situations, sub-groups)
- Respiratory diseases
- Road trauma
- Addictions
- Mental health
- Acute intoxications
- Etc.
1. Mass commercialization and public health

Europe: no link between consumption and penalty regime (EMCCDA 2011)

Netherlands: no link between legal status and use, but link between commercialization and use (MacCoun 2011)
1. Mass commercialization and public health

Alcohol, tobacco, medications

Systems based on profit growth generate more users, higher risk uses, and harmful cost reduction strategies

For-profit actors can become counter-forces to public health regulation
1. Mass commercialization and public health

Marijuana sector firms get marketing pushback as legalization looms

LE DEVOIR
Cliniques financées par l'industrie de la marijuana: le Collège des médecins est inquiet

Photo: Jacques Nadeau, Le Devoir
Le cultive de la marijuana médicinale est en hausse au Canada.

Marie-Victoire Ouellet
Correspondante parlementaire
15 novembre 2019
Santé

Institut national de santé publique
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1. Mass commercialization and public health

2009: mass commercialization of cannabis in Colorado (Colorado Public Heath 2017)
1. Mass commercialization and public health

Cannabis user rates (last month) in Colorado 2002-2014

Source: NSDUH (2015)
1. Mass commercialization and public health

Daily or near-daily cannabis use rates amongst declared users (last month) in Colorado 2002-2014

Source: NSDUH (2015)
1. Mass commercialization and public health

Daily or near-daily cannabis use rates amongst declared users (last month): Colorado – United-States 2002-2014
1. Mass commercialization and public health

Higher THC concentration in the USA (ElSohly et al. 2016)

Figure 1.
Average $\Delta^9$-tetrahydrocannabinol ($\Delta^9$-THC) concentration of DEA specimens by year, 1995 – 2014.
Emergency admissions and hospitalisations possibly linked to cannabis in Colorado (Colorado Public Health - 2017)
1. Mass commercialization and public health

Poison centre calls linked to cannabis in Colorado (Colorado Public Health - 2017)
2. The public not-for-profit distribution system in Québec

- Société Québécoise du Cannabis (SQDC)
  - Purchase and retail monopoly
  - Mandate: access without increased consumption
  - Types and potency of products
  - Quality control

- Constitutional? Applicable? Fair application? Direct users to public retailer or to clandestine market?

- Personal production (at home or in a coop): prohibited in Québec

- What commercial pressure on SQDC?

- « Medical » system

- Model and controls appropriate?

- Health Canada licensing of producers (private for profit)

- On-Line-sales
  - Retailers
    - 12 SQDC (t1) - up to 300

- Sustainable?

- Prevention and harm reduction practices?

- What law enforcement?

- Illegal distributors

- Direct users to public retailer or to clandestine market?

- « Medical » system

- Constitutional? Applicable? Fair application? Direct users to public retailer or to clandestine market?

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- « Medical » system

- Model and controls appropriate?

- Health Canada licensing of producers (private for profit)
Final thoughts: Monitoring, research and evaluation

Uses and health consequences patterns

Production, distribution and use regulation

2021: Quebec’s and Federal law review
2023: Federal medical law review

Useful for other jurisdictions?
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