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PRESS RELEASE

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Graphics – Shattered Glass, Teen Smoking Marijuana

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Former addict, drug trafficking officer, employer to shatter marijuana myths

Muskegon County Prosecutor D.J. Hilson is hosting the second in a series of Shattering the Myths events on Friday, April 20, 2018, from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. High school students from throughout Muskegon County will join the entire Orchard View High School student body in their auditorium to hear from former addict Coty Hill, Eagle Alloy Owner John Workman, and former Colorado Drug Trafficking Officer Dale Quigley about the negative impacts of marijuana.

"The biggest myth of all," Hilson said, "is that marijuana does not harm developing young brains. The truth is, the National Institute on Drug Abuse reports marijuana use as a teen leads to an average of an eight point drop in IQ as an adult," said Hilson.

The April 20 exclusive student event will feature real data from the State of Colorado regarding marijuana's impact on public health, the economy, and education. Quigley is currently the Deputy Coordinator of the National Marijuana Initiative for the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area program in the US. He has an extensive background in narcotics investigations and supervising drug units including a gang-based drug task force with the FBI. Workman will talk about how marijuana use impacts employment, and Hill will share her real life struggle. Hill, now a sobriety coach at 70x7, started abusing marijuana as a teen and then began using cocaine and other illegal substances. She later landed in prison.

On May 11, a video recording of the event will be available at the Alliance for Marijuana Prevention coalition website at ampmuskegon.org. Hilson is asking schools to show and discuss the video during health classes and assemblies. He is also urging parents to view the video as well. "The sooner parents talk to their kids about drug use the better," said Hilson. "Parents who don't know how to start the conversation can visit talksooner.org, or download the free app filled with tips and resources," he added.

Hilson pointed out that the active ingredient in marijuana, Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), has increased significantly from an average of 1% in 1970 to 30% in 2013, making today's marijuana an alarmingly more potent drug. Meanwhile, in the 2016 MiPHY survey of Muskegon County teens, only 43% think marijuana use is risky; 48% report it would be easy or very easy to get marijuana; and 15% say they have used marijuana in the past 30 days. MiPHY is short for the Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth survey issued by the Michigan Department of Education.

Hilson also cited recent statistics from a report by the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning that more drivers are driving under the influence of marijuana. The number of traffic crashes with drivers under the influence of marijuana in Michigan more than doubled from 76 in 2012, to 160 in 2016; with fatal crashes escalating from 70 in 2012, to 138 in 2016.

For answers to questions about this event, please contact the Health Project – Community Benefit Ministry of Mercy Health at 231-672-3201. For help with a substance abuse problem, please contact HealthWest at 231-720-3200.

Shattering the Myths is grant funded by a local health prevention coalition called AMP – Alliance for Marijuana Prevention through the Lakeshore Regional Entity. It is offered in cooperation with 70x7, Mediation & Restorative Services, Muskegon Area Intermediate School District, Muskegon County Parole Office, Muskegon County Prosecutor's Office, Muskegon County Sherriff's Office, Muskegon Township Police Department, Orchard View Schools, and Public Health - Muskegon County.

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