

How marijuana tax revenue could be used

As Gov. Andrew Cuomo makes his latest push to legalize recreational marijuana, health care providers want to make sure tax revenue gained would benefit addiction treatment.

Cuomo's adult-use plan would impose a trio of taxes: 14 cents to \$1 per gram on the cultivation of cannabis, 20% of the invoice price on the sale by any person to a retail dispensary, and 2% of the same invoice price to be collected for the county in which the retail dispensary is located.

The plan would designate tax revenues for addiction treatment as well as other areas recommended by the Office of Cannabis Management.

Addiction advocates have long held that tax revenue gained through legalizing recreational marijuana should be earmarked for addiction treatment rather than infrastructure alone.

Additionally, John Coppola, executive director of the New York Association of Addiction Services and Professionals, said prevention should be a big part of any plan.

There needs to be a message about underage and young adult use, Coppola said, adding that includes what the potential effects are on the final stage of brain development around ages 25 and 26.

The state also should consider how it will ensure there is treatment available to people who develop a substance-use disorder as a result of legalization, he said.

"You don't wait for the problems to happen," he said.