

Senate APPA Committee March 26, 2018
Bill C-45 (Cannabis)
RCMP Follow-up

QUESTION

Senator Patterson: Just following up on that, certainly, education for youth and other members of the community was emphasized as a very important companion to this bill, which could make for easier access to marijuana in northern communities.

The federal government has budgeted monies for education, I believe, in conjunction with the plans to implement this bill.

Are there funds that have been allocated to the RCMP for the purpose of public education? I do know a bit about the financial pressures on the RCMP right now, and I commend you for your stressing the need to focus on education which, as I say, has been echoed in communities.

Are you going to have additional resources to meet what northern communities fear is going to be a significant impact on already vulnerable populations?

Mr. Daroux: Thank you for the question. Yes, we will be applying additional resources to education and focusing. We recognize, though, those resources cannot just sit in Ottawa. We have to reach out to the community where the connection is made in the community and the message is best conveyed through those existing relationships.

Additionally, I think, when we talk about education, it is one thing to have one area of government talking about some of the issues around misuse of substances, but it's even more important when we start working closely with school systems, we work with the health system and local governments as well to convey that same message to children, especially to our youth, so that there is consistent messaging across, whether it's parents giving that message, the school or the RCMP officer.

In answer to your question, yes, we will be applying additional resources but we will also be focusing, especially at the national level, on having collaborative messages come from multiple sources to provide education to youth and parents.

Senator Patterson: Can you provide information and specific details about the additional resources you mentioned?

Mr. Daroux: We can get those details and I'll bring those forward.

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RESPONSE

The RCMP has received new resources to support and align with Health Canada-led efforts to expand the reach of the public education and awareness campaign for Canadians ahead of the anticipated legalization of cannabis across the country.

This includes additional funding and personnel for the RCMP's Contract and Aboriginal Policing (CAP) business line, devoted to the development of materials to enhance awareness of the impacts and dangers of substance use and misuse from a law enforcement perspective, particularly in relation to drug-impaired driving. These resources will further enhance collaborative support for divisional/community initiatives focused on northern and remote communities.

These materials are shared with Canadians through social media and the RCMP website, and are also delivered in-person during outreach with communities, key partners and stakeholders. Information and resources for youth can be found on the RCMP's Centre for Youth Crime Prevention website (CAP National Youth Services). The website provides valuable learning materials to those who work with young people (police officers, teachers, adults working with youth) and to the youth themselves, including evidence-based, age and culturally appropriate crime prevention messages, information and resources. Outreach and awareness materials include posters, lesson plans, fact sheets, self-assessments, videos and online activities.

In addition, since the implementation of the RCMP Impaired Driving Strategy in December 2013, the RCMP has conducted 11 national impaired driving awareness and enforcement days to raise awareness about the dangers and consequences of alcohol and drug-impaired driving. This initiative has resulted in over 652,000 vehicles passing through RCMP check-stops, with over 5,000 enforcement actions taken against impaired drivers on the days of the check-stops alone.

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Senator Christmas: Are First Nations police officers involved in the training that will take place for this act?

Mr. Daroux: The training is being developed now in anticipation of the legislation coming forward. Of course, there could be changes or intricacies within the legislation we can't anticipate, but the training is moved forward as much as it can.

We're working not only within the RCMP itself, but we are working with other police agencies as well to roll out standardized training across the country. We are continuing to move forward as much as we can now and we will continue to move forward depending on the timeline that we're given.

Senator Christmas: Under the sister bill, Bill C-46, one of the proposed changes is to introduce mandatory roadside testing. I presume First Nations police officers will also be part of that training as well.

Mr. Daroux (not Senator Tardif): That falls outside my area; I can get someone to give you a better response. The training will be national and available to police officers across this country.

RESPONSE

Public Safety Canada is consulting with First Nations police services to assess their current state. The RCMP will be creating training curriculum including oral fluid training (once devices have been identified) that will be available to all police services including to First Nations police. Mandatory roadside testing being proposed within Bill C-46 is limited to roadside alcohol screening in which training is currently being delivered through established platforms.