

SMOKE SIGNALS



JANUARY 2018
BULLETIN #3



Cannabis survey to be released at Six Nations Community Meeting

On **Sunday, Jan 28th, from 1 to 4pm at Yogi's Barn** in Six Nations, Green Health for 6 will host a community meeting to discuss the results of their survey.

SIX NATIONS – The results are in. The people of Six Nations want no political interference – from inside or outside of their community – when it comes to the regulation of the cannabis industry on their territory.

The survey was undertaken by the on reserve dispensary Green Health for Six. It was mailed to 2,300 households in Six Nations and New Credit. It asked 20 questions about people's use of medicinal and recreational cannabis, and gauged their attitudes towards its use in their territory.

"A total of 731 people completed the survey, with 626 respondents providing their Indian Status numbers," said Hawk, beaming with pride as he held a hefty stack of completed surveys in his hands. The survey was carried out from December 4th to 31st, 2017. Surveys were filled out in hard printed copy and digitally online.

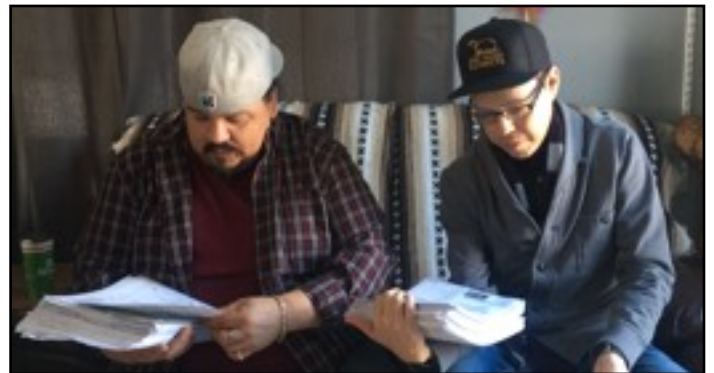
Status numbers were requested in order to prove the identities of respondents, in case someone chose to

dispute the legitimacy of the participants or question the relevance of the results.

Survey numbers appear to demonstrate an unprecedented level of popular engagement on a matter of sovereignty in health and healing, economic opportunity, as well as the restoration of Onkwehon:we self determination in medicine.

"It's my understanding that band council is not really a voice for the people, but they were put here [by the Canadian government] as administration," said Hawk. "I felt that they were doing nothing at all to get the people's voice heard. So we put the survey to the community to get answers to what we felt was valuable information."

Full-page ads with the survey were taken out in both of the community's weekly newspapers, the *Two Row Times* and the *Turtle Island News*. Surveys were returned in person, sent by post, texted in as a photograph, or filled out as an online form.



Jeff Hawk and Aaron Sault of Green Health for 6 with some of the 731 survey results they received.

Of the 731 respondents, 75% identified as being Onkwehon:we and belonging to a clan and nation of the Haudenosaunee/Iroquois people. 31.9% identified themselves as being Status Indians, while 7.4% defined themselves as Canadian, with another 3.1% identifying as non-native, and 0.8% selecting "other."

The results appear to be a powerful expression of the people's will, suggesting cannabis is here to stay at Six Nations, and that it should be kept in the hands of the people.

53.8% agreed that the industry should be "regulated" by traditional medicine people and run according to Haudenosaunee custom. And nearly 28.3% said they believed that an association of indigenous cannabis retailers should regulate the industry, with many surveys suggesting combining both options together.

Only 4.4% of the respondents felt that the Six Nations Confederacy Council should have a hand in regulating the cannabis industry. An even smaller

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First Nations Medicinal gives back



Parents Maggie and Justin, parents of baby Autumn.



Eliot Gauthier and Chadwick McGregor of First Nations Medicinal.

TORONTO – For many Indigenous communities, medicinal cannabis has become an important economic asset, bringing prosperity to many of those entering the industry. In Wahnapiatae First Nation, dispensary owner Chadwick McGregor is determined to share some of that wealth with his community.

“In December we ran a contest called Bringing you Christmas, where we got people to submit video submissions of families that needed help,” said McGregor at Toronto’s Sick Children’s Hospital as he introduced the winners.

The chosen family was that of Autumn McCulligh, a young child from Garden River First Nation who was born with Ebstein’s Anomaly, a rare heart condition that has worsened since April of this year, when she was first taken to the hospital. According to her mother Maggie, complications stemming from surgery led to a severe brain injury which left Autumn fully disabled.

“We are really appreciative,” said Maggie, barely able to hold back her tears. “This is very important. This is the hardest year ever. She doesn’t deserve to go through this. Thank you!”

The support from First Nations Medicinal enabled the family to get through Christmas without having to worry about their immediate financial situation. Christmas gifts were provided for the whole family, and McGregor even provided mom and dad with tickets to a Leaf’s game so they could get a much needed break.

“Because of being out here in Toronto, they haven’t been able to continue to pay for the living expenses,” explained Eliot Gauthier, McGregor’s business partner and girlfriend. “So we’re going to help them do that. Every week all the proceeds from the donations we raise are going to go to their landlord.”

The Christmas dinner provided by First Nations Medicinal also included a full catered turkey dinner for the

family — “mash potatoes, turkey, stuffing, a pie, the whole nine yards,” said McGregor.

McGregor’s contribution is coming at a time when debates over who should control the cannabis industry in Indigenous lands rages across the nation as the Federal government unveils their legalization scheme for next year.

For McGregor, who swears by the healing properties of the cannabis plant, an Indigenous controlled industry will mean the difference between one anchored in profit making and one anchored in community building.

“The dispensary should be out there to help people, and that’s what we’re trying to do,” he said. “Money has to come in, but it should also go back out there to help people, not just sit in someone’s pocket. And I believe cannabis is here to do that.”

To this end, McGregor said he is working to make First Nations Medicinal,

which opened in September of this year, much more than just a dispensary. Having himself battled with addictions, McGregor said he wants to turn the place into a centre to help those with opiate and alcohol addictions, and to help “get people off medications in general.”

“I suffered addictions in the past, and cannabis helped me,” he said. “And I’m now off of all medications and living a very healthy life, and I know that I owe it all to cannabis.”



Baby Autumn McCulligh.

fraction, 3.1%, thought the Elected Council should have a role in regulating cannabis, and only 1.6% wanted to follow the regulatory system of the Province of Ontario and Canada. However, there was a large minority of 21.1% that indicated that they weren't sure how the industry should be regulated. 77% of respondents wanted more information and to get involved in the ongoing discussion around cannabis on the territory.

Perhaps the area of greatest consensus was with the question of whether Six Nations should have the sovereign right to determine their own path and choices regarding cannabis. The answer was a resounding "Yes" coming from 96.5% of the respondents.

Respondents further rallied around the idea that adults wishing to purchase medicinal cannabis should be able to do so at on-reserve dispensaries, with 94.9% of respondents agreeing. A slightly smaller percentage – 86.4% – held that cannabis for recreation purposes should also be available on reserve in the same manner.

BAND COUNCIL INTERFERENCE

The owners of Green Health for Six consider sharing these results with the public a duty and a service, and hope that by doing so, indigenous people will realize that their industry is a legitimate one. The point, Hawk says, is to show council that they work for the people, not the other way around.

"The voice lies with the people. Band council has no more power than the people," he said. "The chief who sits over there in that position has no more power than you or I. This survey...means the people have made a decision, so...how are (Elected Council) going to challenge this, when

we have the majority that they don't have?"

Though council has released statements claiming they are open to dialogue, Hawk says they have received no response to their multiple requests. That is what has pushed people like Hawk to take matters into their own hands. "I think this is a big margin in our history, a big step forward to our sovereign right as a nation," he said. "I think everybody should attend and ask questions and be involved."

By comparison, when a recent survey was carried out by the Six Nations Elected Band Council in August 2017, it received 339 responses, and it did not require status card numbers to verify the respondents. It only asked one vaguely worded question concerning cannabis, "Should

Six Nations get involved in medical cannabis?" The results were 51% in favour and an even of split of 24.5% saying no, and 24.5% expressing uncertainty or requiring more information.

In the 2016 Band Council election, Chief Ava Hill won with a total of 620 votes, while none of the elected councilors received more than 137 votes.

The full results of the survey will be presented to a community meeting held at Yogi's Barn, from 1-4pm at 2318 Chiefswood Rd. in Oshweken, on January 28, 2018.

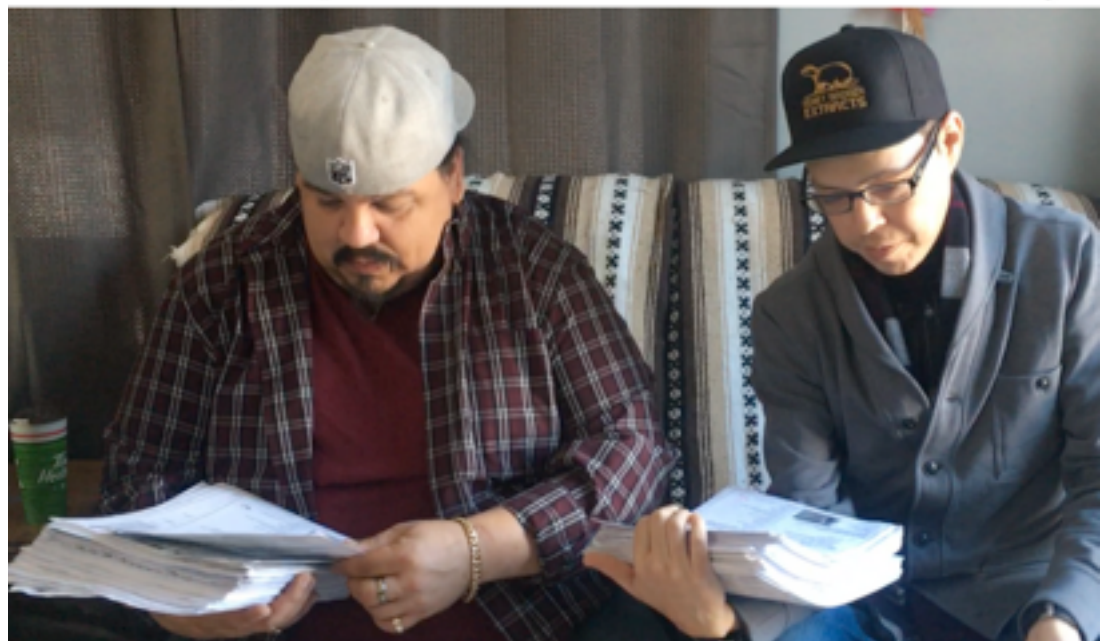
"I believe people will come there and leave inspired," says Aaron Sault. "They will leave there feeling proud of being First Nations... proud that their community has a bright future. And proud knowing that the future generations are not forgotten and that the cannabis industry is going to greatly help them."

Green Health for Six is located on Highway 54, in between Brantford and Caledonia, and is open Monday to Saturday 10am to 7pm, and open on Sunday from 12pm to 5pm.

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The people have spoken.

We received 731 responses to our Six Nations Medical Cannabis survey.



Come and hear the results.

Community Meeting
Sunday, January 28th, 1-4pm
Yogi's Barn, 2318 Chiefswood Rd., Oshweken



Six Nations Cannabis survey says...

All graphs below were generated by Google Forms based on the data received from 731 respondents to the survey. Note that not all respondents answered all questions, and so the number of responses to each question varies.

