



# Minnesota Psychiatric Society

*Improving Minnesota's mental health care through education, advocacy and sound psychiatric practice*

President Matt Kruse, MD, FAPA (815-351-1030), Legislative Committee Chair Michael Trangle, MD, DLFAPA (612-859-4471), Executive Director Linda Vukelich (651-278-4241), Lobbyist Bill Amberg (651-260-9973)

## **POSITION STATEMENT ON LEGALIZATION OF RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA –**

The Minnesota Psychiatric Society, representing nearly 500 Minnesota psychiatric physicians, believes that all policy decisions impacting access to marijuana should be informed by scientific findings. Among the MPS members are experts in addiction medicine and experts in brain development. **MPS does not support the legalization of recreational marijuana** based on our review of neuroscience and public health data related to marijuana use and changing patterns of use in states that have approved the sale of marijuana as a recreational substance. We recognize legalization of marijuana in Minnesota is a medically, socially, and economically complex issue. When considering your vote on this issue, we ask that you take into account the following substantiated research-based facts on the impact of marijuana use on health as well as broader safety and policy implications.

### **Health, brain, vulnerability in youth**

We are particularly concerned legalizing the recreational use of marijuana exposes teens and young adults (up to age 25) during a period of time where the brain is sensitive to developing addiction and exposure to addictive substances can permanently alter development of the brain. In addition, it gives youth the impression that it is safe, especially children and teens who are most vulnerable to the neuropsychological effects of marijuana use.

- Individuals who begin using cannabis before age 18 are four to seven times more likely than adults to develop marijuana use disorder. (17)
- More teenagers are vaping cannabis than ever before; this has well known toxicity. (14, 15)
- Frequent marijuana use can impair learning; interfere with memory, perception, and judgment; and damage the heart, lungs, and immune system. These risks are magnified for people who start using marijuana at a young age, and some of the effects are irreversible. (12)
- A drop in overall intelligence and attention persists for years after last use (5, 6, 21)
- In Anchorage, school suspensions for marijuana use and possession increased more than 141% from 2015 (when legalization was implemented) to 2017. (11)
- An increased risk of developing psychotic disorders (possibly as high as six-fold) including schizophrenia, as well as increased risks of depression and anxiety disorders (1, 2, 3, 4, 21)
- Decreased motivation and increased rates of dropping out of school, (7, 8)
- Impaired decision making, impulse control, and regulation of emotions (18, 19)

### **Increased drug use in legalized recreational marijuana states**

- Past month use of marijuana among 18-25- year-olds is 22% and past year use is 35%, according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health. This rate is concerning for the risks to the developing brain. (14)
- Past-month marijuana use among young people aged 18-25 in "legal" states has increased 8 percent in the last year (30.94% versus 28.62%). Use in this age group is 50 percent higher in "legal" states than in non-legal states (30.94% versus 20.66%). (14)
- Among adolescents, the perception of the health risk of marijuana has declined and marijuana use has become increasingly socially acceptable, even as the perception of the health risk of tobacco has risen and its use has become increasingly undesirable. (16, 17)

### **Public health, welfare, safety net policy considerations**

- Despite early reports, cannabis use does not reduce prescribed or illicit opioid use or overdose fatalities. (20, 23)
- Greater dependence on tax supported public welfare, unemployment, and drug treatment services. (7, 9)
- Increased prevalence of highway fatalities due to marijuana-impaired drivers after enactment of marijuana legalization. (22, 24)
- Every \$1 gained in tax revenue costs Colorado \$4.50 to mitigate the effects of legalization. (10, 12)

### **We support decriminalization policy which is shown to:**

- Reduce the number of people arrested, incarcerated, or otherwise swept into the justice system; (25)
- Alleviate racial, ethnic and income-based disparities in the criminal justice system, (25)
- Revise current law enforcement structure and redirects resources to prevent serious and violent crime; (25)
- Create a climate in which people who are using drugs problematically have an incentive to seek treatment; (25)

For the above reasons, MPS opposes legalized recreational marijuana. **As you consider any efforts to enact a marijuana legalization plan in Minnesota, we urge you to consider proactive protections and public education campaigns to inform Minnesotans about these issues. If legalization does proceed, it is imperative to enact and enforce proactive packaging and targeting safeguards to pre-empt campaigns similar to those employed by tobacco and vaping companies to target and hook young consumers.**

## References

1. Moore et al. Cannabis use and risk of psychotic or affective mental health outcomes: a systematic review. *Lancet* 370 (9584): 319-328, 2007.
2. Compton et al. Association of pre-onset cannabis, alcohol, and tobacco use with age at onset of prodrome and age at onset of psychoses in first episode patients. *American Journal of Psychiatry* 166: 1251-7, 2009.
3. Copeland, J.; Rooke, S.; and Swift, W. Changes in cannabis use among young people: impact on mental health. *Curr Opin Psychiatry* 26:325-329, 2013
4. Hall, W.; and Degenhardt, L. Adverse health effects of non-medical cannabis use. *Lancet* 374(9698):1383-1391, 2009.
5. Meier M. et al. Persistent cannabis users show neuropsychological decline from childhood to midlife. *Proc Natl Acad Sci* 109:E2657-64, 2012.
6. Dougherty DM, Mathias CW, Dawes MA, et al. Impulsivity, attention, memory, and decision-making among adolescent marijuana users. *Psychopharmacology* 226(2):307-319, 2013
7. Macleod, J. et al. Psychological and social sequelae of cannabis and other illicit drug use by young people: A systematic review of longitudinal, general population studies. *Lancet* 363(9421):1579-1588, 2004.
8. Brooke et al. The association between earlier marijuana use and subsequent academic achievement and health problems: a longitudinal study. *Am J Addict* 17:155-160, 2008.
9. Kleber, H.; and DuPont, R. Physicians and Medical Marijuana. *Am J Psychiatry* 169 (6)564-568, 2012.
10. Retail Marijuana sales as reported on the Retail Marijuana Sales Tax Returns and Medical Marijuana Sales as reported on the State Retail Sales Tax Return (CR100). Prepared by the Colorado Dept of Revenue, Office of Research and Analysis. February 2019
11. Wohlforth, C. (2018, January 11). Marijuana school suspensions more than doubled after legalization. Anchorage Daily News. Retrieved February 2019, from <https://www.adn.com/opinions/2018/01/11/marijuana-school-suspensions-more-than-doubled-after-legalization/>.
12. Centennial Institute <http://cdn-centennial.pressidium.com/centennial/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Economic-and-Social-Costs-of-Legalized-Marijuana-CO.pdf>
13. Office of Recovery Oriented Systems of Care. Data Source(s): National Institute on Drug Abuse, Monitoring the Future Survey, 2007—2018. Youth Risk and Behavior Survey, 2007—2017. [www.michigan.gov/bhrecovery](http://www.michigan.gov/bhrecovery).
14. 2018 National Survey of Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) Releases, SAMHSA, [www.samhsa.gov/data/release/2018-national-survey-drug-use-and-health-nsduh-releases](http://www.samhsa.gov/data/release/2018-national-survey-drug-use-and-health-nsduh-releases)
15. JAMA - <https://www.inquirer.com/health/consumer/vaping-marijuana-e-cigarettes-teenagers-20191218.html>
16. Marijuana Use and Perception of Risk Among High School Students, National Institute on Drug Abuse, Monitoring the Future Survey, 2007-2018. Youth Risk and Behavior Survey, 2007—2017; [www.michigan.gov/bhrecovery](http://www.michigan.gov/bhrecovery)
17. NIDA. (2019, December 24). Marijuana. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana> on 2020, January 28, [www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana](http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana)
18. Gorey, C., Kuhns, L., Smaragdi, E. et al. Age-Related difference in the impact of cannabis use on the brain and cognition: a systematic review. *Eur Arch Psychiatry Clin Neurosci* 269, 37-58 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00406-019-00981-7>
19. A Population-Based Analysis of the Relationship Between Substance Use and Adolescent Cognitive Development; *Am Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol 176, Issue 2; Jean-François G. Morin, B.A., Mohammad H. Afzali, Ph.D., Josiane Bourque, M.Sc., Sherry H. Stewart, Ph.D., Jean R. Séguin, Ph.D., Maeve O'Leary-Barrett, Ph.D., Patricia J. Conrod, Ph.D.
20. Gabrielle Campbell, Wayne D Hall, Amy Peacock, Nicholas Lintzeris, Raimondo Bruno, Briony Larance, Suzanne Nielsen, Milton Cohen, Gary Chan, Richard P Mattick, Fiona Blyth, Marian Shanahan, Timothy Dobbins, Michael Farrell, Louisa Degenhardt, "Effect of cannabis use in people with chronic non-cancer pain prescribed opioids: findings from a 4-year prospective cohort study" *Lancet Public Health* 2018; 3: e341–50
21. Volkow, N. D., Swanson, J. M., Evins, A. E., DeLisi, L. E., Meier, M. H., Gonzalez, R., ... & Baler, R. (2016). Effects of cannabis use on human behavior, including cognition, motivation, and psychosis: a review. *JAMA psychiatry*, 73(3), 292-297
22. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2006-2011; Colorado Department of Transportation, 2012-2017
23. Shover, C. L., Davis, C. S., Gordon, S. C., & Humphreys, K. (2019). Association between medical cannabis laws and opioid overdose mortality has reversed over time. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 116(26), 12624-12626.
24. <https://learnaboutsam.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/2019LessonsFinal.pdf>
25. It's Time for the U.S. to Decriminalize Drug Use and Possession, Drug Policy Alliance, (<http://www.drugpolicy.org/resource/its-time-us-decriminalize-drug-use-and-possession>), 2017

## Other Materials for Reference

- American Society of Addiction Medicine Public Policy Statement on Marijuana, Cannabinoids and Legalization (Sept 15, 2015)
- American Psychiatric Association Position Statement on Need to Monitor and Assess the Public Health and Safety Consequences of Legalizing Marijuana (July 2014)
- American Psychiatric Association Position Statement on Marijuana as Medicine (December 2013)
- American Society of Addiction Medicine White Paper on State-Level Proposals to Legalize Marijuana (July 25, 2012)
- Roffman R. Legalization of cannabis in Washington State: how is it going? *Addiction* (2016)
- <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/release/2018-national-survey-drug-use-and-health-nsduh-releases>
- National Institute on Drug Abuse, Monitoring the Future Survey, 2007—2018. <https://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/trends-statistics/monitoring-future>

**Links for additional information:** <http://adai.uw.edu/marijuana/factsheets/adolescents.htm>, [www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov), [www.aacap.org](http://www.aacap.org), [www.smartcolorado.org](http://www.smartcolorado.org), [www.gettingitrightfromthestart.org](http://www.gettingitrightfromthestart.org), [learnaboutsam.org](http://learnaboutsam.org), *SAMMn.org* (*Smart Approaches to Marijuana MN, Health Risks*) (<https://www.sammn.org/health-risks>)