



Legalization of Recreational Marijuana¹

MSNJ is compelled to oppose the legalization of the recreation use marijuana based on data available on roadway dangers, negative effects on adolescent brain development and fetal development, risk of respiratory diseases and other health conditions. Based on scientific data, marijuana should not be legally available to minors **and** young adults. We urge lawmakers to consider patient safety when considering legalization.

If legalization is to occur, we ask for public health measures to be taken well before products are available for sale. Product testing and consumer education and warnings should precede sales. We ask for the following parameters to protect public health, at the least:

- a. Prohibit the legal sale of marijuana products to anyone younger than 25 years of age.
- b. Prohibit marketing and advertising to youth, akin to the current restrictions on tobacco product advertising.
- c. Require that products made available for retail sale be tested for potency and clearly labeled with THC content. Require maximum THC amounts per serving (e.g. 100 milligrams per unit) and per purchase (e.g. Colorado purchase limit: 800 milligrams).
- d. Require warning labels to be placed on all marijuana and marijuana products not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) which are offered for sale in retail outlets, stating, “Marijuana use increases the risk of serious problems with mental and physical health, including addiction” with notes that adverse mental and physical health effects are well documented, as well as “Marijuana should not be used by pregnant women or persons under age 25,” and “Marijuana should not be used by persons prior to operating motor vehicles and heavy machinery.”
- e. Require that marijuana products (such as edibles and beverages) be sold only in child-proof packaging and be accompanied by the mandatory distribution of educational flyers regarding the risks of overdose and poisoning in cases of accidental ingestion by children or household pets.
- f. Earmark taxes placed on marijuana and marijuana product sales, wholesale or retail, such that a majority of tax revenues are required to be devoted to public education about addiction, health effects of cannabis and synthetic cannabinoid use, prevention of initiation of cannabis and cannabinoid use by youth, or research on the health risks and potential benefits of marijuana, “natural” cannabinoids, and synthetic cannabinoids. And, direct funding to conduct research on impaired driving.
- g. Limit marijuana and marijuana product sales to state-operated outlets, akin to Alcohol Beverage Control regulations existing in several states and Canadian provinces, which preserve both public access and the potential for governmental revenues linked to sales, while limiting the broad commercialization of public sale of potentially harmful but brain-rewarding products.

¹September 2018 - BOT adopted policy.

²October 2020 – HOD reaffirmed policy and added “k.”

- h. Implement public awareness campaigns highlighting the risks of marijuana use to discourage use by vulnerable populations, including adolescents and young adults, individuals with mental illness, and those with a history of addiction involving alcohol or other drugs.
- i. Highlight the risks and negative impact to the lungs and respiratory system of smoking marijuana.
- j. Set safety and quality standards (product testing, dispensary inspections, etc).
- k. Set penalties for adults who enable diversion of cannabis to minors.

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