

Minnesota Society of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

February 25, 2019

RE: Medical Perspective on Marijuana use in Children/Teens

Sir or Madam,

Legalization of marijuana for recreational use in our great state of Minnesota is a medically, socially and economically complex issue. The Minnesota Society of Child Adolescent Psychiatry (MSCAP) is aware of the great deal of research and compromise it will take to finalize this issue. Respectfully we would like to provide simple substantiated medical facts on the impact of marijuana on the teenage brain.

- Use of marijuana prior to the age of 18 increases the chances of that individual developing a lifelong addiction to any drug or alcohol. The teen years are a period of time where the brain is sensitive to developing addiction and exposure to addictive substances can alter development of these brain areas.
- Use of marijuana by teenagers increases their risk of developing other mental health disorders such as anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts and schizophrenia while they are using and as adults. Exposure makes the symptoms of their illness harder to treat.
- Exposure to marijuana impacts the part of the brain which is in charge of decision making, impulse control and regulation of emotions and behavior. This area of the teen brain is more immature than the adult brain. Exposure to marijuana during the teen years further increases the risk of impaired decision making. This can contribute to increased risk of injury and death from unintentional causes such as motor vehicle accidents and violence such as suicide and homicide.
- Studies demonstrate that grades and future trajectory drop from marijuana use in the teenage population.

As you walk through this complicated decision please consider MSCAP a resource for the medical facts regarding marijuana use. We would be happy to provide additional information if needed. Our hope is to contribute medically substantiated evidence to assist our representatives if and how marijuana is legalized.

Sincerely,

Joshua Stein, MD₁₅₁

Joshua Stein MD
President