

# SAMMn

Smart Approaches to Marijuana Minnesota

## Mission

To educate the citizens of Minnesota on the research and science of marijuana usage with the scientific understanding of marijuana's harms and potential as medicine.

## Position

Our public health position is that current science does not support the commercialization and normalization of recreational marijuana use.

## Do you know?

### Allowing legalization increases the black market.

In fact, black market activity has increased, not decreased (10), in states that have tracked it, where recreational use is legal.

### Most support across the country is to prevent marijuana from being legalized for commercial and recreational purposes.

In fact, recreational legalization does not have widespread support. When polls ask separate questions about medical vs. recreational legalization, there is a minority of support for legalizing recreational use (1). Many states have defeated or disapproved bills to legalize and commercialize recreational marijuana, including Illinois, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Delaware, Oklahoma, and Rhode Island.

### States that have legalized recreational marijuana have increased opioid abuse.

In fact, some studies show that legalized recreational marijuana has decreased opioid mortality rates and prescribing rates (4,5). However, subsequent studies that controlled for flaws in these studies, have debunked these findings. The reports show the opposite trend, that recreational marijuana legalization actually increased opioid abuse (6,7).

### Driving while high on marijuana is very unsafe.

In fact, marijuana use impairs many functions needed for safe driving. States where recreational use is legal, such as Colorado and Washington, have seen twice as many drugged driving offenses (10).

### Commercializing marijuana increases public health costs beyond any economic benefits.

In fact, the negative social and health costs of marijuana use far outweigh any anticipated tax revenues from commercialization (13).

### Marijuana is addictive.

In fact, like all drugs, marijuana can lead to addiction. Research suggests that between nine and 30% of those who use marijuana may develop some degree of marijuana use disorder (2). Marijuana available today is more addictive and about four times stronger than "Woodstock weed" of the 1960's (3).

### Restricting recreational marijuana use to those ages 21 or older does not keep underage youth safe.

In fact, one in four 12th-graders reported they would try marijuana, or that their use would increase, if the drug were legalized. More youth than ever believe that marijuana is not harmful (8). Past month and past year marijuana use by teens are noticeably greater in states that have legal commercialization compared to non-legal states (9).

### People are not in prison for small-time marijuana use.

In fact, about half of federal and about 15 percent of state prisoners are admitted for a drug-related offense, and most of these incarcerations are for trafficking in drugs harder than marijuana (11).

### Marijuana harms a person's mental health.

In fact, marijuana can directly worsen symptoms of anxiety, depression, and schizophrenia. Marijuana use increases a person's risk for developing a serious mental illness (12).

## References

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Prepared by Smart Approaches to Marijuana, Minnesota Affiliate  
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