

New York State

**PTA**<sup>®</sup>

everychild.onevoice.<sup>®</sup>



## Leading the Way



The legalization and commercialization of recreational marijuana for use does not serve the greater need of society, but creates a public health threat and an open door with a mixed message to young people that using recreational marijuana is acceptable.

With a current opiate epidemic in our midst, introducing recreational marijuana to the market is counterintuitive.

We urge you to heed the recommendations from leading medical organizations and evidence based efforts by New York's own substance use disorder treatment and prevention service delivery system, and give equal attention to scrutinized data from other states that have legalized recreational marijuana use.

Legalization of recreational marijuana increases risks of driving fatalities, accidents in the workplace/home and public health effects of first and second hand smoke.

Marijuana edibles and THC beverages have already been marketed to minors, mirroring the marketing of vaping products a few years ago which led to an epidemic of under-age e-cigarette users.

# Oppose the Legalization of Recreational Marijuana

We strongly oppose the establishment of a regulated marijuana (cannabis) program.

In 2017 the American Medical Association (AMA) approved a policy position, based upon recommendations from its Council on Science and Public Health, that marijuana is a dangerous drug, a serious public health concern, and that the sale of marijuana for recreational use should not be legalized.

New York must take a comprehensive review of the research regarding the health, mental health, and substance use disorder consequences to legalizing marijuana for self-medication purposes. Self-medicating with any substance, when not being guided and monitored by a medical professional, can potentially lead to substance use disorders. Marijuana use should be discouraged, especially by persons vulnerable to the drug's effects and in high-risk populations such as youth, pregnant women, women who are breastfeeding, and the mentally ill.

While NYS PTA understands that medical marijuana has medicinal benefit for certain conditions qualified under State law (ie: cancer, AIDS, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis), we are very concerned that marijuana is an addictive drug (such as in marijuana use disorder), that can have significant adverse public health impact if it were to be legalized for non-medicinal purposes.

NYS PTA agrees that disproportionate arrests and jailing of racial and ethnic minority groups is abhorrent, yet legalizing marijuana is not going to solve this systemic problem. NYS PTA supports alternatives to incarceration and the re-evaluation of sentencing guidelines.

For more information, please contact Kyle McCauley Belokopitsky, Esq., NYS PTA Executive Director at [execdirector@nyspta.org](mailto:execdirector@nyspta.org), 518-452-8808