



The legalization and commercialization of recreational marijuana creates a serious public and child health threat and sends a mixed message to young people that using recreational marijuana is acceptable.

With the serious crisis of youth vaping, and the continuing opioid epidemic, this harmful legislation is counterintuitive.

NYS PTA urges you to heed the recommendations from leading medical and public health organizations, education groups, and the law enforcement community, and NOT legalize recreational marijuana.

## OPPOSE THE LEGALIZATION OF RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA

Why must we continue to oppose this measure?

- From 2005 to 2015, the number of youth (ages 13-20) who went to urgent care for marijuana related illnesses increased 172%.
- In Colorado after legalization, marijuana impaired driving deaths went up 150%.
- According to the CDC, 80% of lung illness and deaths are THC-related, and 1 in 10 marijuana users will become addicted. For people who begin using younger than 18, that number rises to 1 in 6.
- In Colorado, toxicology reports of adolescent suicide victims show increased marijuana usage, and marijuana has been linked to schizophrenia, depression and anxiety.
- The Children's Hospital of Colorado outlines the dangers of "Acute Marijuana Intoxication" and discusses the harm of child overdoses, usually as a result of ingestion of edible forms of marijuana (gummy bears, brownies and lollipops).
- Studies show if a child starts using marijuana before 18, the child will lose on average 8 IQ points.

In 2015, the American Academy of Pediatrics reaffirmed its opposition to legalizing recreational marijuana: "We know marijuana can be very harmful to adolescent health and development ... Making it more available to adults – even if restrictions are in place – will increase the access for teens. Just the campaigns to legalize marijuana can have the effect of persuading adolescents that marijuana is not dangerous, which can have a devastating impact on their lifelong health and development."

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