



January 18, 2022

Christopher Alexander, Executive Director  
Tremaine Wright, Chair  
NYS Office of Cannabis Management (OCM)  
Building 9 Harriman Campus  
1220 Washington Ave.  
Albany, NY 12226

Mr. Alexander and Ms. Wright,

The NYS Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc. (NYS PTA) is honored to represent the families of our 2.6 million school children and our nearly 250,000 members. It is our mission to make every child's potential a reality and support EVERY child with ONE voice.

We write to formally request that when promulgating regulations related to the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act (MRTA), the Board and OCM keep child health and safety at the forefront of decision making.

As MRTA is implemented, we must reflect on how our policies and procedures ensure that our children are safe from the practicalities related to legalized recreational marijuana.

We must work together to combat what we sadly know from other states related to children:

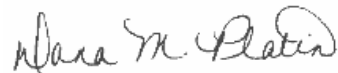
- The Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs found that children in California are significantly more likely to use marijuana since its legalization there in 2016;
- Nevada and Oregon saw similar trends: once legalized, youth marijuana usage significantly increased when analyzing data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health;
- The University of Michigan's Monitoring the Future Survey of American Youth reported that between 2017 and 2018, the percentage of 8th and 10th graders who report "vaping" marijuana increased 63%;
- According to a 2019 report by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's toxicology reports, the percentage of adolescent suicide victims testing positive for marijuana continues to increase;
- Between 2011 and 2013, 20.7% of suicide victims between the ages of 10 and 19 tested positive for marijuana (compared with 12.7% who tested positive for alcohol). Between 2014-2016, 22.4% tested positive for marijuana (compared with 9.3% for alcohol);
- From 2005 to 2015, the number of youth (ages 13-20) who went to urgent care for marijuana related illnesses increased 172%;

- A systematic review and meta-analysis in JAMA Psychiatry (2019) of 11 studies including more than 23,000 individuals, found that adolescent cannabis consumption was associated with increased risk of developing depression and suicidal behavior later in life, even in the absence of a premorbid condition; and
- 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.

Thus, we hope we can work together in moving forward to see that we each support the health, safety, and wellness of our children.

As always, NYS PTA stands ready to work collaboratively to support ALL children and families and we look forward to discussing these matters with you. We are available at any time by contacting our Executive Director, Kyle Belokopitsky, at [execdirector@nyspta.org](mailto:execdirector@nyspta.org) or 518-452-8808 (office) or 518-817-3017 (cell).

Sincerely,



Dana Platin, President



Kyle Belokopitsky, Esq., Executive Director

Cc: Governor Hochul  
Dan Fuller, Deputy Secretary for Education