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Leading NJ Psychiatric Associations Oppose Legalization of Recreational Marijuana

1 message

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**Leading NJ Psychiatric Associations Oppose Legalization of Recreational Marijuana*****New Jersey Psychiatric Association and
NJ Council of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Call on Lawmakers to Oppose Legalized Pot***

TRENTON - The New Jersey Psychiatric Association and the New Jersey Council of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (NJCCAP) this week called on New Jersey lawmakers to oppose the legalization of recreational marijuana in the Garden State.

"Before passing legislation that will impact the lives of thousands of New Jersey families, New Jersey legislators should consider the public health consequences of legalizing recreational marijuana, particularly on our young people," said Dr. Wil Yeung, NJCCAP President. "There are many well-documented adverse effects of marijuana use such as altered brain development, cognitive impairment, decreased brain activity in areas of the brain and a significant increase in risk of developing psychotic symptoms or disorders. Adolescents with habitual use have a greater risk of decreased academic performance, increased school dropout rates, decreased overall educational attainment and decreased workplace productivity."

"As we've seen in other states, the rate of children under 21 using pot will increase if it's legalized for recreational use," Dr. Yeung continued. "The adolescent and teen brain is still in a process of critical development, making it that much more vulnerable to drug use. The use of marijuana, particularly in adolescents, increases not only the risk of addiction to marijuana, but also the risk of addiction to other substances."

New Jersey Psychiatric Association President Randy Gurak, M.D. said, "Legalizing marijuana for recreational use is terrible public health policy that puts New Jersey's families at risk. There are known carcinogens and toxins in marijuana and the long-term risk for developing cancer is unknown. The use of synthetic cannabinoids has led to multiple emergency room visits for paranoia,

anxiety, and psychosis. There have also been multiple reports of increased driving accidents and fatalities linked to driving while under the influence of marijuana."

The National Institute on Drug Abuse at the National Institute of Health recently released results from their "Monitoring the Future" study that showed more 12th graders than ever admitted they would use marijuana if it were legal. Specifically, one in four 12th graders thought that they would try marijuana, or that their use would increase, if marijuana were legalized. Prevalence of annual marijuana use also rose by a significant 1.3 percentage points to 23.9% in 2017, based on data from 8th, 10th, and 12th grades combined.

NJCCAP and NJPA join a growing number of organizations and grassroots coalitions that oppose the legalization of recreational marijuana, including law enforcement groups, other medical associations, prevention organizations and parent groups. For more information, log onto www.nj-ramp.org.

About NJ-RAMP: NJ-RAMP is a coalition of individuals and associations who believe that the health, safety and economic consequences of recreational marijuana legalization far outweigh the perceived social benefits. The grassroots organization consists of medical doctors, community groups, treatment providers, drug prevention professionals, business owners, law enforcement officers, parents, religious leaders, and many others. For more information, visit www.nj-ramp.org.

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NJ-RAMP, a project of SAM Action, [400 N. Columbus Street, Suite 202, Alexandria, VA 22314](#)

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