



American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



Vermont Chapter

Prevention Before Commercialization of Marijuana

The Vermont Medical Society (VMS) and American Academy of Pediatrics, Vermont Chapter (AAPVT) are opposed to the creation of any non-medical commercial system for retail sales of marijuana because of the negative health impacts on the Vermont population, especially youth and young adults. VMS and AAPVT urge the Vermont General Assembly to oppose commercial marijuana sales of marijuana in Vermont until systems are in place to institute evidence-based prevention programs with dedicated, sustainable funding that prevent risky behaviors among adolescents.

At a minimum, any system of commercialization MUST include meaningful prevention and education measures as included in the Governor's Marijuana Advisory Commission's recommendationsⁱ and best practices outlined in the Vermont Department of Health's Health Impact Assessment (HIA) of Marijuana Regulationⁱⁱ to:

- establish and fully fund a substance misuse prevention and education fund;
- restrict the placement, density and access to venues to only those 21 years and older;
- establish taxation pared with minimum price standards and restrictions of price promotion;
- require child-resistant packaging; graphic health warnings;
- enforce marketing restrictions such as limiting displays, mass marketing and flavored products;
- enforce laws prohibiting sales to minors;
- establish a blood level operating limit for THC and driver testing infrastructure; and
- provide expanded screening in primary care.

Why the Commercial Sale of Marijuana Puts the Health of Vermonters at Risk

- While all approaches to legalizing use or sales of marijuana present risks to public health, an alcohol-style commercial model of sales creates the highest incentives for suppliers to promote use harmful to public health, to consolidate the market and to expand of the customer base through mass marketing.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Increased availability of marijuana and the normalization of marijuana use in Vermont has great potential to increase youth and young adult use rates; rates of marijuana use among young adults have been increasing nationwide, including among young adults in Colorado since that state approved commercial sales of recreational marijuana;^{iv}
- Vermont currently has some of the highest rates of young adult use of marijuana in the country, with 38% of 18-25 year-olds using marijuana in the last 30 days;^v
- S.54 as passed the Senate has ZERO funding for prevention, with a tax rate which falls well short of the Governor's Marijuana Advisory Commission final recommended tax rate of 26% and ignores the recommendation to dedicate a portion of this revenue to prevention.^{vi}

ⁱ <https://marijuanacommission.vermont.gov/document/governors-marijuana-advisory-commission-final-recommendations> and <https://marijuanacommission.vermont.gov/document/education-and-prevention-subcommittee-final-report>

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http://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2016/11/HIA_marijuana_regulation_in_VT_App_2016.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Caulkins et al, Considering Marijuana Legalization: Insights for Vermont and Other Jurisdictions, RAND Corporation, 2015.

^{iv} According to figures from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, adults in Colorado who had consumed marijuana in the month before being surveyed went from being 12.86 percent of the adult population in 2012/13 to 16.62 percent in 2015/16. See <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/nsduh/state-reports-NSDUH-2016>

^v <https://marijuanacommission.vermont.gov/document/education-and-prevention-subcommittee-final-report>

^{vi} <https://marijuanacommission.vermont.gov/document/governors-marijuana-advisory-commission-final-recommendations>