

# **CADCA Responds to New York Times Editorial Board's Call for Marijuana Legalization**

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Today, Gen. Arthur T. Dean, Chairman and CEO of Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA), the nation's leading substance abuse prevention organization, issued the following statement in response to the New York Times Editorial Board's call for marijuana legalization, which was published on Sunday, July 27th.

“CADCA is disappointed in the New York Times Editorial Board for their very public call for national marijuana legalization. The move is shortsighted and completely disregards the science showing the harmful effects of marijuana legalization on the adolescent brain. Left out of the New York Times article are the many detrimental effects marijuana use has on teens and public safety.

“We know from the research that regular marijuana use can have profound negative effects on the teenage developing brain. It can hamper a young person's critical thinking and memory functions, and in some cases trigger the onset of mental illness. In addition, a long-term study showed that regular marijuana use in the early teen years lowers IQ into adulthood, even if users stopped smoking marijuana as adults. Marijuana use among teens also has a negative impact on school performance. A study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showed that students who received D's or F's in school were more likely to be current users of marijuana than those who earned A's.

“As a national organization that builds coalitions to prevent youth alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, CADCA has long believed that marijuana legalization is a bad idea that will increase youth drug use. We as a nation already face enormous societal costs associated with youth alcohol, tobacco and prescription drug abuse. For example, while alcohol is strictly regulated for people 21 and over, it is the most commonly used and abused drug among youth in the United States and is responsible for more than 4,300 annual deaths among underage youth. In fact, people aged 12 to 20 years drink 11 percent of all alcohol consumed in our country. In addition, national data shows that more 12 to 17 year olds are in treatment for marijuana dependence than for alcohol (187,000 versus 122,000 in 2012 respectively).

“Before more members of the media jump on this legalization bandwagon, we call for careful consideration and balanced reporting so that the American people can be informed of marijuana's negative impacts on youth.”