

Marijuana Harmless? Think Again

MarijuanaHarmlessThinkAgain.org

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Marijuana Legalization Talk – Hazardous to our Children’s Health

As a fourth generation native Arizonan with twenty-six years as a practicing Pediatrician, Past President of the Arizona Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, father and grandfather, I am opposed to the legalization of marijuana in Arizona. It is clear to me that the science and research shows what serious detrimental, even dangerous effects this would have on the youth of our State.

With data now flowing in from states where legalization has occurred, there has been an increase in marijuana use in adolescents, which happened after the laws passed but even before those laws took effect. The message sent to our youth is that marijuana is not harmful because adult voters would not legalize a dangerous drug. But that message does not square with reality.

New research shows that the young brain, specifically the prefrontal cortex responsible for controlling judgment and decision-making, is not fully developed until the mid-20s. Exposing this immature brain to marijuana has been demonstrated to cause short and long-term severe changes in cerebral function.

Brain consequences of short-term marijuana use:

Interference with learning caused by impaired short-term memory, decreased concentration, attention span, and problem solving.

Alterations in motor control, coordination, judgment, reaction time, and tracking ability have also been documented, which may contribute to unintentional deaths and injuries especially considering motor vehicle accidents if driving while intoxicated by marijuana.

Higher incidence of psychosis in youth who are predisposed to schizophrenia.

Perhaps more concerning are the brain consequences of long-term marijuana use:

The younger an adolescent starts using marijuana the brain is affected such that it is more likely long term adult addiction will result.

In a dose-dependent pattern, marijuana use lowers the odds of high school completion and increases the use of other illegal drugs and suicide attempts.

Even casual use of marijuana causes changes in brain shape, volume and density in regions responsible for motivation and emotion.

About Marijuana Harmless? Think Again!

Marijuana Harmless? Think Again! is a nonpartisan alliance of concerned citizens, business professionals and community leaders who are committed to raising awareness about the harms of marijuana. Marijuana is an addictive substance that affects the brain, especially in kids, in ways that impair intelligence, reasoning, judgment and clarity of thought. The legalization of marijuana in Arizona would result in an additional 32,000 high school students being more likely to use the drug putting them at risk in school and in life.

Persistent use of marijuana is associated with decline in neuropsychological function which persists even after the drug is discontinued. The loss of an average 6 IQ points has been demonstrated in a long term research study.

Our children's brains are too important to sacrifice for this experiment. I urge Arizonans to be vocal in their opposition to the legalization of marijuana.

Respectfully submitted,

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