

SAM Calls For White House, DOJ, SAMHSA, FDA To Stop Ignoring Marijuana Issue; Host Marijuana Summit With Public Health Researchers

SAM Co-Founder Patrick Kennedy asks for President Obama to round up federal agencies and shine spotlight on mental, physical harms of marijuana.

WASHINGTON, DC - Project SAM (Smart Approaches to Marijuana), a nonpartisan coalition of scientists, researchers, politicians, and prevention and treatment advocates, calls upon the federal government to step up its strategy to reduce marijuana use and its consequences.

"This President will rightly be remembered as an advocate of health care, and he should be applauded for that," remarked former Congressman Patrick Kennedy, the co-author of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act and the co-founder of Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM). "But does he also want to be remembered as the President who ushered in America's next public health crisis? We need our leaders to convene the Nation's top scientists and come up with a plan to tackle this issue."

"Contrary to positions taken by the American Medical Association, American Society of Addiction Medicine, and the American Psychiatric Association, the public is getting the message - from the media and our lawmakers - that marijuana use comes with few negative consequences. It is time we all set the record straight," said Dr. Stuart Gitlow, President of the American Society of Addiction Medicine and SAM Science Advisory Board Member.

The call comes amid a *New York Times* editorial urging national legalization, despite early data showing increases in [poison center calls](#), [hash oil explosions](#), and [stoned driving](#) in Colorado. In that state, where the legalization of retail marijuana began on January 1st, crime has increased and marijuana revenue has barely reached a third of projections. The American Medical Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Society of Addiction Medicine, and National Alliance of Mental Illness all oppose legalization.

"We can no longer accept a 'see-no-evil, hear-no-evil' marijuana policy. Negative consequences are mounting, and we were promised the government would be measuring and surveying the damage of legalization. So far there has been nothing," remarked Kennedy.

About Project SAM

Project SAM is a nonpartisan alliance of lawmakers, scientists and other concerned citizens who want to move beyond simplistic discussions of "incarceration versus legalization" when discussing marijuana use, and instead

focus on a "health-first" policy that neither demonizes nor legalizes the drug. SAM supports tackling mental health treatment and stopping the next "Big Tobacco" in the form of "Big Marijuana." SAMi is supported by a world renowned science advisory board and has affiliates in 27 states.