**PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

Date:

**Contact Information:**

*Organization name*

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**Studies Point to Marijuana Addiction**

Much controversy surrounds marijuana use.  Some argue that marijuana is not addictive.   However, current facts speak otherwise.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) tracks national treatment data.  The results show an alarming 30% rise in marijuana treatment admissions between 1998 and 2008.   Comparing marijuana treatment to other substance abuse admissions, the data reveals the percentage for other substances did not rise and remained roughly constant over the same period.

According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA), an estimated 9 percent of people who use marijuana become dependent upon it or addicted.  What that means is those who use marijuana long-term can find it difficult to stop using the drug even if its use is interfering with many aspects of their life.

Nationally and in our community, a growing number of youth do not see marijuana use as harmful.  According to the recent (name of survey), a high percentage of youth are using marijuana.  The survey revealed that xx% of 8th graders, xx% of 10th graders and xx% of 12 graders report using marijuana within the past 30 days.  Thirty-day use in this survey is an indication of more regular usage of the drug.

NIDA’s Research Report on Marijuana Use states that “1 in 6 youth who start using marijuana in their teens will become addicted.  That rate rises to 25-50 percent for youth who use on a daily basis. In 2008, approximately 15 percent of people entering drug abuse treatment programs reported marijuana as their primary drug of abuse; 61 percent of those were under age 15, and 56 percent were between 15 and 19 years old.”

(Local spokesperson) says, “Facts point strongly to a rise in marijuana addiction, especially among our youth.  With the increased push for marijuana legalization, the results directly link to increased addiction health risks.  It is time to face the fact that marijuana is not harmless.”

For more information visit: MarijuanaHarmlessThinkAgain.org.

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**Marijuana Use Lowers IQ**

Amidst the nationwide marijuana myth vs. fact controversy, a recent scientific study provides evidence about the long-term effects of marijuana use.

The Research Report on Marijuana Use published by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) identifies the short-term effects of marijuana use, including: impairment of memory, attention, judgment, and other cognitive functions as well as coordination and balance.

However, a long-term study confirms suspicions; marijuana use by teens is harmful to their developing brain.  The study, which was published in August of 2012 in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences by Dr. Madeline Meier of Duke University, reveals permanent and detrimental effects.

Researchers in New Zealand administered IQ tests to over 1,000 individuals at age 13 and assessed their patterns of cannabis use at several points as they aged. Participants were again tested for IQ at age 38, and their two scores were compared as a function of their marijuana use.   The results were striking: Participants who used cannabis heavily in their teens and continued through adulthood showed a significant drop in IQ between the ages of 13 and 38—an average of 8 points for those who met criteria for cannabis dependence.

The loss of 8 IQ points could drop a person of average intelligence into the lowest third of the intelligence range.

In our community, the recent (survey name) reveals that XX% of teens have smoked marijuana within the last 30-days, indicating a more regular use.

(Local spokesperson) said, “The high percentage of youth who are regular users of the drug marijuana are putting themselves and their future at great risk.”

Nora D. Volkow, M.D., NIDA Director, posted on the NIDA website on March 21, 2013:  “Regular marijuana use in adolescence is part of a cluster of behaviors that can produce enduring detrimental effects and alter the trajectory of a young person’s life—thwarting his or her potential. Beyond potentially lowering IQ, teen marijuana use is linked to school dropout, other drug use, mental health problems, etc. Given the current number of regular marijuana users and the possibility of this number increasing with marijuana legalization, we cannot afford to divert our focus from the central point: Regular marijuana use stands to jeopardize a young person’s chances of success—in school and in life.”

For more information visit MarijuanaHarmlessThinkAgain.org.

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**Marijuana Push for Legalization**

In 2010, the medical marijuana initiative passed in Arizona by a narrow margin of approximately 4,000 voters.   It was a ballot initiative led by the Marijuana Policy Project whose stated goal is to legalize marijuana.

The initiative created ‘medicine’ by popular state vote rather than Federal Drug Administration (FDA) approval. This has been true in twenty other states as well.

The scientific facts of marijuana do not support it as medicine.  The Drug Enforcement Administration classifies marijuana as a Schedule1 drug because “(1) marijuana has a high potential for abuse; (2) marijuana has no currently accepted medical use in treatment in the United States; (3) marijuana lacks accepted safety for use under medical supervision.”

Opposition to the 2010 medical marijuana initiative was fueled by a belief that the initiative was a back-door approach to recreational drug use.   Today the numbers attest to that fact.  According the Arizona Department of Health Services’ October 2, 2013 report, 40,328 medical marijuana cards have been issued.  Of those 909 were for cancer and 29,464 were for self-defined pain.  71% of the cardholders are male and 46% are under age 40.  A recent television report done by CBS 5  KPHO News Investigates found a high incidence of recreational drug use.  Their report is aptly titled: “Medical Marijuana going to young, healthy.”

The 2012 Arizona Youth Survey showed that 12% of Arizona youth are illegally obtaining marijuana from cardholders.

Over recent months, marijuana legalization organizations have openly stated their goal to legalize the drug marijuana nationwide.

In response, health reports are emerging on the damaging effects of marijuana drug use.  A New Zealand study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences showed that regular marijuana use among teens lowered their IQ by 7 to 8 points.  A report by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) shows that treatment for marijuana dependence/addiction rose by 30% over the past decade.

According to an Arizona Criminal Justice Commission 2013 and The Partnership Attitude Tracking Study 2012, “If marijuana is legalized in Arizona, 32,000 high school students, who have never smoked pot, say they would be more likely to try it.”

Yavapai County is the home of MATFORCE.  The organization’s Executive Director, Merilee Fowler, said, “MATFORCE’s goal is to reduce substance abuse. Recreational use of the drug marijuana is counter-productive to the health and safety of our community.  That is why MATFORCE launched its program called - Marijuana Harmless?  THINK AGAIN.  We invite everyone in the state to join our voice against any effort to increase marijuana drug use.”

For more information visit MarijuanaHarmlessThinkAgain.org.

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