

Doctors say more kids using drugs since marijuana legalized

By Alex Rozier

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SEATTLE -- Seattle Children's Hospital says the number of infractions for drugs in schools continues to increase. Some doctors are now worried that some Washington voters did not consider the impact the legalization of marijuana could have on kids.

Dr. Leslie Walker, chief of Adolescent Medicine at Seattle Children's, says more kids are embracing a mentality that marijuana is OK for them to use since the drug became legal in Washington.

"When kids perceive something as safe, then that's what they are going to go for because most people try to make decisions about their body based on what's safe. So, if they perceive that marijuana is safe and they want to get high, then they're going to try that," Dr. Walker said.

Lisa Davidson, Manager of Prevention and Intervention for Seattle Public Schools, says principals are seeing more marijuana use in public and more family use as well. Davidson agrees with Dr. Walker, saying that it is important parents send a message to kids that student drug use is not OK.

"Each cohort of kids needs to hear the same message and I think, as a society, we haven't been great about that," Dr. Walker said. "We need to wrap it all together and say that substance abuse is a threat to good development and to future abilities to be successful."

Seattle Public Schools' policy is that if a student is caught using or selling drugs, their parents are notified and the student is issued a long term suspension. The student can get the suspension reduced to three days if they get a drug evaluation and follow a doctor's orders on how to get better.

The school says it is not their goal for their kids to end up in the justice system, but rather as a healthy, drug-free young person.