

JUN 15 2023

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Wendy Farley Campbell,

I recently read some troubling current research articles about recreational marijuana use having potentially significant mental health side effects in young people, up to age 26 (apparently, their developing adolescent brains have not matured to the point that they can safely tolerate the highly potent THC in today's cannabis products). These side effects include, but are not limited to, memory loss, lowered IQ<sup>s</sup>, depression, paranoia, psychosis (e.g. schizophrenia), and suicide.

With an alarmingly increasing number of cannabis dispensaries being opened in Oregon (there are currently over 660 of them!), and the THC potency skyrocketing, one has to be concerned with the wellbeing of our young people. Also, let's keep in mind that the many products being sold include tantalizing items like cookies, taffies, gummies, etc. etc. etc. These are seemingly benign and fun appearing items. Many of our young people might see these products as being safe recreation, particularly since their state and community leaders have essentially communicated that all is OK.

Prior to 2014, there really was not much safety data to report on since actual laboratory experiments on marijuana safety in adolescents would not have been ethical, or even legal. Nevertheless, the people of Oregon voted to legalize cannabis products for

recreational use, without fully understanding some of the negative side effects. Nine years later, scientific studies are clearly showing that our adolescents (remember, adolescence continues through to the age of 26) are actually being sold legal recreational drugs that have the strong potential of causing mental health problems, some of which are incurable (you do not heal from schizophrenia - it is a lifetime debilitating mental disease that leaves people frequently having to live out their lives in depressing, and, at times, dangerous institutions and half-way houses.

Perhaps we should be asking ourselves whether the monetary profits being made in cannabis dispensaries are worth the risk of endangering our young people's futures. Would the parents of adolescents here in Florence accept their children's futures being recklessly gambled with, when there is strong emerging scientific evidence that could be used to prevent these mental health problems from ever occurring?

Please understand that I am not proposing that we close down Florence's existing dispensaries; instead, I am suggesting that we delimit the number of pot stores to what we already have.

Thank you for your consideration.  
Gerald King

I am enclosing the titles of some of the research articles on "Adolescent's mental health problems and marijuana use."

- Marijuana linked to mental health risks in young adults, growing evidence shows. May 26, 2023 by Akshay Syal M.D.
- Recreational cannabis use by teens linked to risk of depression, suicidality. May 5, 2023 by Columbia University Dept. of Psychiatry
- Association of cannabis use in adolescence and risk of depression, anxiety, and suicidality in young adulthood. A systematic review and meta-analysis. Feb. 13, 2019  
JAMA Psychiatry
- Association of high-potency cannabis use with mental health and substance use in adolescence. May 27, 2020  
JAMA Psychiatry
- Chronic adolescent THC exposure: Mental health crisis?  
Oct 1, 2021 Psychiatric Times