



ASAM

American Society of Addiction Medicine

Public Policy Statement on Marijuana

Marijuana is a mood-altering drug capable of producing dependency. Its chief active ingredient is delta-9-Tetrahydrocannabinol, but there are many other ingredients.

Marijuana has been shown to have adverse effects on memory and learning, on perception, behavior and functioning, and on pregnancy. Because of the widespread use of this drug, its effects on mind and body, and the increasing potency of available supplies,

ASAM strongly recommends:

- 1. Education about drugs, beginning in the earliest grades of elementary school and continuing through university level. Drug education should contain scientifically accurate information on the dangers and harmful effects of marijuana, and on the disease of marijuana dependence.**
- 2. Health and human service professionals should be educated about marijuana and marijuana dependence as a required part of their curriculum.**
- 3. Persons suffering from alcoholism and other drug dependencies should be educated about the need for abstinence from marijuana and its role in precipitating relapse, even if their original drug of choice is other than marijuana. Treatment programs providing addictions treatment for chemically dependent patients should include tests for cannabinoids with other drug test panels and consider test results when designing treatment plans.**
- 4. Marijuana dependent persons, like other drug dependent people, should be offered treatment rather than punishment for their illness. Treatment of marijuana dependence should be part of the plan for rehabilitation of any person convicted of a drug-related offense, including driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, who is found to be marijuana dependent.**
- 5. Medical uses of pharmaceutical delta-9-Tetrahydrocannabinol (such as Marinol™) for the treatment of illnesses associated with wasting, such as AIDS, the treatment of emesis associated with chemotherapy, or for other indications should be carefully controlled. Smoking marijuana is dangerous to the health of any user, and produces health risks of passive smoke akin to risks of exposure to passive tobacco smoking. Inhaled smoke is a suboptimal delivery method for any agent**

intended to be health-promoting in any way. ASAM supports continued evidence-based research into alternative delivery systems of cannabinoid applications.

- 6. Research on marijuana, including both basic science and applied clinical studies, should receive increased funding and appropriate access to marijuana for study. The mechanisms of action of marijuana, its effect on the human body, its addictive properties, and any appropriate medical applications should be investigated, and the results made known for clinical and policy applications. In addition, ASAM strongly encourages research related to the potential and actual effects of marijuana-related public policy.**
- 7. Physicians should be free to discuss the risks and benefits of medical use of marijuana, as they are free to discuss any other health-related matters. Recognized scientific researchers following established research protocols should be free to conduct research on marijuana and pharmaceutical cannabinoids.**

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