EFFECTS OF MEDICAL MARIJUANA ON THE RECOVERY COMMUNITY

Thesis:
MEDICAL MARIJUANA POSES AN UNACCEPTABLE RISK FOR ADOLESCENTS CAUGHT IN MARIJUANA DEPENDENCE, TREATMENT AND RECOVERY

Read the concerns that physicians, educators, law enforcement, researchers, prevention professionals and families have regarding medical marijuana and people in recovery.
Concern #1

Adolescents in different stages of marijuana treatment are at high risk of relapse in states that have adopted medical marijuana. With medical marijuana comes diversion, availability, peer acceptance, attitudes about marijuana’s harmfulness and frequency of use, all factors contributing to a possible relapse.

Bob Lynn, Ed. D

For so many addicted individuals, medical marijuana quickly becomes the great abyss that creates nightmares for individuals and families. The rationalization that the term “medical” provides opens the door for addiction and almost certain relapse for the drug dependent client.

I have supervised more than 1,000 clinical assessments for adjudicated children. More than 90% had, as their drug of choice, marijuana with more than 80% requiring treatment. Conveying to this population that marijuana is an approved medicine may amount to a societal death sentence. How can a just society be so devious as to twist facts for the pleasure of some built on the ruin of others, so barbaric?

My experience of more than 40 years as a clinician, educator and researcher in the addictions field has led me to these beliefs.

Robert DuPont, M.D.

Although most drug abusers have stopped drug use many times, the big challenge is long-term abstinence because of the strong biological pull of the drug experience. ...the state of being abstinent from alcohol and drugs while developing a strong character based on honesty and unselfish values is called “Recovery.” ...legitimizing smoked marijuana as a “medicine” is a serious threat to the health of all Americans, and particularly, the health of individuals in recovery.
Concern #2

Marijuana diversion is a problem for dependent adolescents in treatment and recovery.

Salomonsen-Sautel, Ph.D. et al

New Research

Medical marijuana use among adolescent patients in substance abuse treatment is very common, implying substantial diversion from registered users. The study showed approximately 74% of the adolescents had used someone else’s medical marijuana, and they reported using diverted medical marijuana a median of 50 times. ...adolescents who used medical marijuana had an earlier age of regular marijuana use, more marijuana abuse and dependence symptoms, and more conduct disorder symptoms compared with those who did not use medical marijuana.

Medical Marijuana Use among Adolescents in Substance Abuse Treatment,
Salomonsen-Sautel, Ph.D. et al
Concern #3

Marijuana availability is a problem for dependent adolescents in treatment and recovery. Easier access leads to frequency of use.

Illinois medical marijuana legislation permits a high school student who is a qualified patient to get 2.5 ounces of marijuana every 14 days (183 joints, 13 per day). Even the most experienced marijuana all-day-long drug user smokes on average only three to four joints a day. Smoking 3 or 4 joints a day of the 183 joints would leave you with roughly 135 joints, or just under 2 ounces (1.8 ounces). The patient could sell the 1.8 ounces of marijuana for $250 to $550, enough to pay for their initial 2.5 ounces and an additional profit. This would encourage drug deals on the school campus.

A Long-Time Prevention Professional

Youth or adults who have become addicted to marijuana are among the most severely affected, as they struggle to attain or maintain a stable recovery. Walking by a legal marijuana source store, or even seeing advertisements about accessing marijuana can create strong “triggers” toward use, and greater ease of getting the marijuana further erodes barriers that otherwise help maintain sobriety/abstinence.
Concern #4

Arbitrarily branding marijuana as a medicine legitimates marijuana use and ignores marijuana’s harmfulness for dependent adolescents in treatment and recovery.

Gary M. Fields, Ph.D. High School Principal and Superintendent for over 30 Years

As a school leader who dedicated his life to helping youth, families, schools and communities avoid the danger of all drugs I learned there is an unbelievable challenge in convincing youth of the dangers of marijuana more than any other drug. Simply stated, those tempted to experiment with marijuana do not believe the message they receive from adults, the media, and those pushing legalization. ...as I talk with scores of teens all over the country, the message I hear over and over again is the same — “what’s wrong with smoking pot. I’ve heard marijuana is an effective medicine. How can it possibly hurt me?

Police Officer Working Narcotic Enforcement the Majority of 26 Years

In addition, my experience with States that have a “medical marijuana” program is that the program serves as a way to legitimately grow marijuana which is later sold illegally in other states. Make no mistake about it—marijuana is a drug which has negative effects to a vast majority of those who abuse it. It is a drug which leads many to abuse additional drugs down the road.
Concern #5

Peer acceptance and attitudes about marijuana’s safety is a problem for dependent adolescents in treatment and recovery.

Scott McCormick, M.D.

As a full-time clinical psychiatrist I regularly attempt to repair lives damaged, families broken, and jobs lost due to cannabis dependence. Legalizing MJ only increases dope availability to the general non-medical population – including young people, where the data clearly show it promotes psychosis and depression.

Kurt F. Schmid, Executive Director, Chicago HIDTA

Science also informs us that smoking marijuana often leads to other substance abuse and that marijuana is NOT a medicine. Let’s listen to what the science tells us and treat the phenomenon of marijuana use similarly to what we as a society have done with driving while under the influence of alcohol and smoking. Our reactions to “medical marijuana” should be based upon what the science tells us, not merely based upon political and social expediency.

A Loving Wife and Mother

I am writing on behalf of my husband and our three children. Beginning in high school, my husband was a frequent user of marijuana for over 20 years. He is a wonderful man who eventually developed a strong dependence on this seemingly harmless drug. One thing led to another until he advanced to using marijuana and other drugs. As a result, he lost numerous jobs, was arrested on 3 occasions, our children turned against him, and our family nearly lost everything. Thank goodness for a drug court and an enlightened judge. My husband has now been in recovery for five years, he has a job, and our family has reunited. His desire to use marijuana is still strong and likely will always be so.

As a family we are following the horror of a possible medical marijuana law and the impact that in might have on our family. Truthfully, if passed this law may make the temptation to return to his old ways through legalized medical means so strong that he may not be able to resist.

PLEASE – we beg the reader. Do everything in your power to not make this so.