



Promoting safe and healthy youth, families and communities by preventing substance abuse

January 20, 2014

Senator Mary Pilcher-Cook
Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

Dear Senator Pilcher-Cook,

At its December 17th 2014 meeting, the Kansas Family Partnership Board adopted the attached resolution opposing the legalization of marijuana. We encourage you to seriously consider the grave consequences for Kansas of any actions to legalize this harmful drug.

We are concerned that increased access to marijuana will lead to greater use among the youth of Kansas. If marijuana is to be called a medicine, this will create a false perception about its effects.

In Kansas, we expect our physicians to follow well established treatment protocols that are evidence-based and are predicated upon the proven efficacy of those treatments. The clinical efficacy of marijuana has not been proven within the well established and clinically based oversight of the FDA which must review and endorse all medicines. Enacting policies which circumvent these well established reviews is a dangerous way to go since consumer safety is threatened without appropriate clinical oversight.

In other states that have legalized marijuana, there have been severe impacts on youth and families. We should not place Kansas youth and families at such a risk.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dan Roehler", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dan Roehler
President, Board of Directors
Kansas Family Partnership

Attachment

Kansas Family Partnership

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Resolution Against Legalization of Marijuana

- Whereas,** **marijuana is the most frequently used illegal drug** and has a high potential for abuse which may lead to severe psychological or physical dependence; and it is the number one reason Kansas children and adolescents are admitted for substance-dependence treatment in Kansas and the United States. **Smoking marijuana is toxic.** Dozens of harmful chemicals in marijuana like carbon monoxide, tar, benzene and toluene have been identified in inhaled marijuana smoke, in higher concentrations than tobacco smoke.
- Whereas,** **marijuana is much stronger than in the past.** Today's average level of the psychoactive ingredient (THC) in marijuana is dramatically higher than in the distant past. Now, the average is ranges between 9-20 percent, with some oils and refined variants of 80 percent.
- Whereas,** **marijuana is addictive.** Repeated marijuana use often leads to addiction- which means that people have trouble controlling their drug use and often cannot stop even though they want to. Research shows that approximately 9 percent, or about 1 in 11, of those who use marijuana will become addicted. This rate increases to 17 percent, or about 1 in 6, if you start in your teens, and goes up to 25–50 percent among daily users.
- Whereas,** **marijuana is now known to cause structural damage to the brain.** It disrupts development of the brain. It reduces the amount of white matter by as much as 80%, and shrinks the hippocampus, the learning, cognition and memory center of the brain. It appears that particularly use of marijuana in adolescents results in cellular and chemical changes affecting actual brain functions.
- Whereas,** **marijuana is unsafe if you are behind the wheel.** Marijuana is the most common illegal drug involved in auto fatalities. It is found in the blood of around 14 percent of drivers who die in accidents, often in combination with alcohol or other drugs.
- Whereas,** **combining marijuana with drinking increases risk.** Even a small amount of alcohol greatly increases driving danger, more than either drug alone.
- Whereas,** **marijuana is linked to school failure.** Marijuana's negative effects on attention, memory, and learning can last for days and sometimes weeks—especially if you use it often. Someone who smokes marijuana daily may have a 'dimmed-down' brain most or all of the time.
- Whereas,** **marijuana use can lead to lower grades.** Compared with their peers who don't use, students who smoke marijuana tend to get lower grades and are more likely to drop out of high school. Research even shows that it can lower your IQ if you smoke it regularly in your teen years.
- Whereas,** **high doses of marijuana can cause psychosis or panic.** Some people experience an acute psychotic reaction (disturbed perceptions and thoughts, paranoia) or panic attacks while under the influence of marijuana. Marijuana worsens existing mental health problems such as schizophrenia or bipolar illness. It can also trigger or worsen psychotic symptoms in people who do not already demonstrate mental illness.
- Whereas,** **regular marijuana use affects life.** Longtime marijuana users themselves report being less satisfied with their lives, having memory and relationship problems, poorer mental and physical health, lower salaries, and less career success.

Whereas, there is **no scientific proof that marijuana** can satisfy the requirement that it is currently accepted for safe and effective medical use; and

Whereas, **medical treatment should be evidence-based** and determined by professional standards of care; policy and practice surrounding cannabis-derived substances should not be altered until sufficient clinical evidence supports such changes; and marijuana should not be authorized by ballot initiative.

Therefore, be it hereby

Resolved, that the Kansas Family Partnership opposes the legalization of marijuana for medicinal applications unless approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration; and be it further resolved that legalization of recreational use of marijuana will negatively impact Kansas youth, families and communities.

Name (Print): Dan Roehler

Signature: 

Title: Board President

Organization: Kansas Family Partnership

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Data Source: National Institutes of Drug Abuse – www.drugabuse.gov