



February 15, 2021

Members of the House Commerce Finance & Policy Committee,

As you consider the legalization of adult-use cannabis, the MMA is compelled to urge you to draw upon the lessons learned in tobacco control and to keep in mind the important public health and social impacts of legalization.

Conclusive data regarding the short- and long-term health effects of cannabis use are lacking. As such, the MMA strongly supports efforts to change the current classification of cannabis as a Schedule I controlled substance to help facilitate additional clinical and public health research.

Although definitive data may be lacking, there is much we know about cannabis use that should be recognized. The MMA strongly recommends that the following safeguards to protect the health of the public be considered in any actions you may take:

- Research has consistently shown that human brain development and maturation is not complete until the age of 25. Therefore, individuals under the age of 25 should be prohibited from purchasing, possessing, or using cannabis or cannabis-infused products.
- Cannabis use may increase the risk of developing psychiatric disorders, including psychosis (schizophrenia), depression, and anxiety, particularly among individuals with a preexisting genetic or other vulnerability.
- Cannabis use during pregnancy, increases the risk of low birth-weight babies.
- Additional addiction treatment capacity and resources will be needed, as cannabis use may increase the risk of developing substance use disorders.
- Children and adolescents are vulnerable to health risks associated with various cannabis inhalation delivery systems, ingestion of edibles, and exposure to secondhand smoke or vapor.
- Careful attention to product packaging, marketing, and advertising is needed to prevent use by children and adolescents.
- Ongoing collection, analysis and dissemination of relevant public health and safety data is imperative to monitor impacts and modify regulations.

The MMA recognizes that public opinion on recreational use of cannabis is shifting. We also acknowledge that current punitive enforcement policies are disproportionately borne by populations of color. As you continue to deliberate this proposal, the MMA urges you to recognize the known health effects of cannabis use, including impact on brain development, risk of developing psychiatric disorders, risks during pregnancy, and the impact on addiction treatment capacity and resources. The MMA respectfully requests that we remain an active participant in deliberations moving forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marilyn J. Peitso MD".

Marilyn Peitso, MD

President, Minnesota Medical Association