



PRESS RELEASE
December 18, 2013

Contact: Shayda Esfahani
Cell: 778-988-4460
Shayda@learnaboutsam.org

NATIONAL SURVEY:

**MORE THAN ONE THIRD OF 12TH GRADERS
LIVING IN MEDICAL MARIJUANA STATES
GET MARIJUANA FROM SOMEONE ELSE'S
"MEDICAL RECOMMENDATION"**

**60% OF 12TH GRADERS NOW VIEW
MARIJUANA AS NOT HARMFUL**

The Monitoring the Future Study, the only nationally representative sample surveying students in the US, finds that marijuana is a growing problem

WASHINGTON, DC –The only nationally representative survey of students examining drug use patterns and attitudes, conducted by the University of Michigan and funded by the National Institutes of Health, revealed today that one third of high school seniors living in medical marijuana states obtained their marijuana from someone else's medical recommendation. The survey also found that 60% of seniors viewed marijuana as not harmful.

"A new marijuana industry is forming in front of our eyes, and make no mistake about it: they are delighted their customers – today's youth – consider their product safe," remarked former Congressman Patrick J. Kennedy, co-founder of Smart Approaches to Marijuana (Project SAM). "The rise of legalization and medical marijuana has sent a message to young

people that marijuana use is harmless and non-addictive, contrary to science supported by the American Medical Association, National Institutes of Health, and every other major scientific body that has examined the issue.”

The MTF report also found that 6.5% of current high school seniors are using marijuana daily, compared to just 2.3% in 1993. That is a 300% increase in 20 years. Daily marijuana use, according to independent research, is connected to mental illness onset, reductions in IQ, and poor school performance.

“Let these numbers be a wakeup call to parents and decision-makers alike,” said Dr. Kevin A. Sabet, a former senior drug policy advisor in the Obama Administration now serving as the director of Project SAM. “There is no way to properly ‘regulate’ marijuana without allowing an entire industry to encourage use at a young age, to cast doubt on the science, and make their products attractive – just like Big Tobacco did for 50 years. Today’s Big Marijuana is no different.”

Additionally, this year has seen troubling developments in states with legalized marijuana. In Washington state, marijuana-impaired driving incidents have increased by 50% since last year, and in Colorado, school officials and treatment doctors are reporting more problems from marijuana. In Denver, the marijuana industry lobbied hard and won provisions allowing marijuana smoking to be legal within 1,000 feet of schools and in front yards in public view.

“We are inundated with young people reporting for marijuana-addiction treatment,” said Dr. Christian Thurstone, medical director of one of Colorado’s largest adolescent substance-abuse-treatment programs. “Every day, we see the acute effects of the policy of legalization. And kids are paying a great price.”

###

About Project SAM (Smart Approaches to Marijuana)

Project SAM is a nonpartisan alliance of lawmakers, scientists and other concerned citizens who want to move beyond simplistic discussions of "incarceration versus legalization" when discussing marijuana use, and instead focus on practical changes in marijuana policy that neither demonizes users nor legalizes the drug. SAM supports a treatment, health-first marijuana policy.