

2020

ANNUAL REPORT

Fighting for Public Health



SAM Smart Approaches to Marijuana
preventing another big tobacco

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Letter from the President & CEO and Chairman

2020 saw one of the world's largest and most life-altering pandemics in modern history. The year began with the FDA and CDC embroiled in addressing the nation's first ever marijuana-based public health crisis, the vaping illness called "EVALI" that ravaged multiple states across the country. This didn't last long, however. Public health professionals were quickly consumed with addressing what later became known as the COVID-19 virus, and marijuana policy among all other issues became a sideshow – for good reason.

Many of the public health experts leading our country toward freedom from the grips of this pandemic are friends and collaborators of SAM, who share our concerns about commercialized marijuana. The CDC, WHO, and NIDA (NIH) all issued guidance discouraging the use of marijuana given its risk for COVID patients. Dr. Nora Volkow, head of NIDA, informed the public, "the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 could be an especially serious threat to those who smoke tobacco or marijuana..."

During the COVID shutdowns, to the horror of many in public health, the marijuana industry coerced state governments across the country into allowing it to remain open as an "essential business" alongside grocery stores. Of course, they continued to sell THC vapes, oils, youth-friendly gummies, and candies.

When the nation needed a voice of reason in the midst of marijuana industry misinformation and a national public health crisis, SAM and its partners were prepared to fill the void. We were the first organization in the country to notify the public of the potential risks of marijuana use and COVID-19 – a claim later backed by all major public health organizations. We successfully fought to preserve taxpayer dollars from funding potentially cartel-backed pot companies and ensured they remained in the hands of legitimate businessowners who had shut down for the good of the nation.

Moving to marijuana policy specifically, at the federal level we saw historic results from our government affairs expansion in 2019. The 116th Congress completely rejected the SAFE Banking Act, STATES Act, MORE Act, and every attempt by Big Marijuana to get taxpayer-funded COVID bailout money. At the national level, with the incoming anti-commercialization Biden administration, we are optimistic about the future and proud of the work of you and all our partners in securing such excellent results for sound drug policy.

In a year where the nation became more aware of inequality and racial injustice, SAM launched several nationwide social justice-oriented programs – one in partnership with the Illinois Chapter of the NAACP - and supported the reduction of criminal penalties for low-level possession in states like Virginia and New Jersey. As always, we fight for a vision of true social justice for all – not the dystopian myth being sold by Big Tobacco-funded marijuana legalization advocates.

Each year, we are told the ship has sailed on marijuana. Each year, the science, the public, and communities across the nation rise up to prove this assertion to be folly. SAM's media footprint has never been larger, and that is thanks to the growing conversation on what sound policy reform for marijuana truly should be.

2020 led to the disruption of many of our lives. Our prayers are with those impacted by the deadly COVID-19 virus. 2021 is certain to come with tremendous changes as well, but SAM and it's allies will continue to educate the public and achieve victories for public health no matter what the environment serves up – political or otherwise.



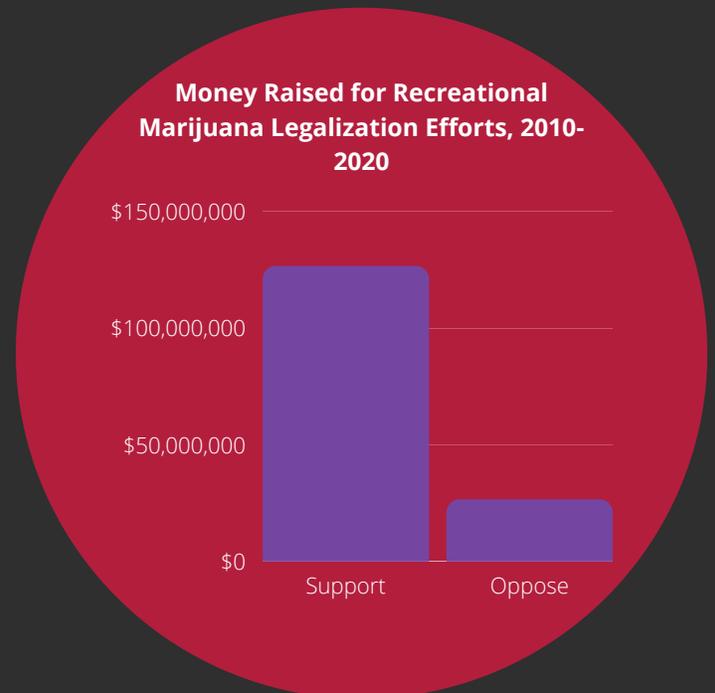
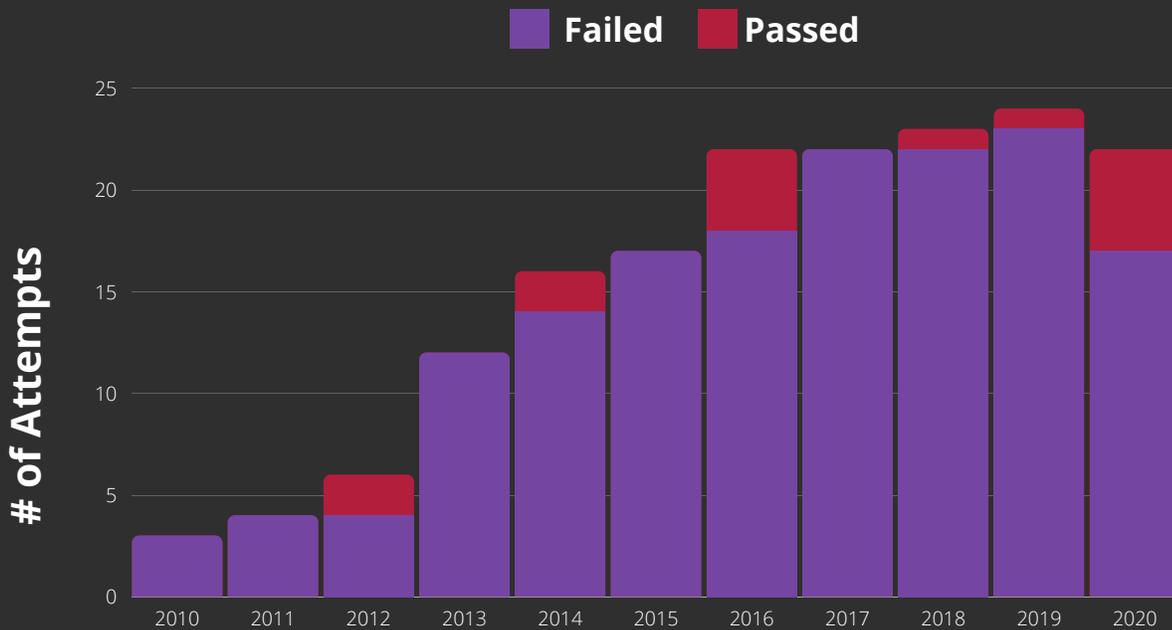
Kevin A. Sabet, PhD
President & CEO
SAM & SAM Action



Jon Talcott
Chairman
SAM

THE COST OF FAILED LEGALIZATION EFFORTS

State Non-Medical Marijuana Legalization Attempts, 2010-2020





MARIJUANA AND MIDTERMS

ANTI-CANNABIS MOVEMENT SPENDING UNPRECEDENTED MONEY



WHY DO WE CARE?



SAM Smart Approaches to Marijuana
preventing another big tobacco

Election Results Livestream

W/ DR. KEVIN SABET & LUKE NIFORATOS

Today @ 4PM ET



lead

SAM Smart Approaches to Marijuana
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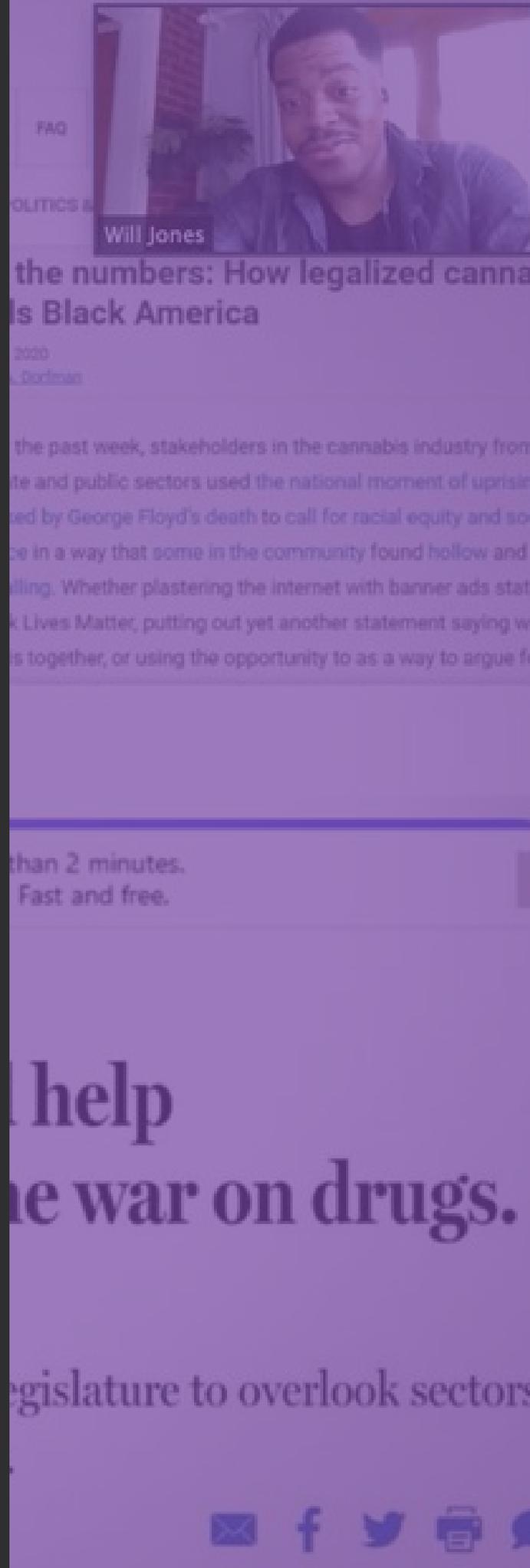


Illinois Marijuana Prevention Summit

SEPTEMBER 24TH

EDUCATING THE PUBLIC FROM A DISTANCE, TOGETHER

COVID-19 may have brought many activities to a screeching halt, but SAM adapted and reached new heights, thanks to your support. In 2020, SAM Speakers conducted over 100 virtual speaking events and trainings to various organizations including prevention groups, community coalitions, healthcare organizations, lawmakers, and law enforcement agencies. This year also saw the creation of our first-of-its-kind SAM Webinar Series. From March to December, SAM conducted 15 virtual webinars with over 2,000 attendees coming from every state in the U.S. and 10 different countries. Like in years past, the annual SAM Summit was held in conjunction with the Rx Drug Abuse & Heroin Summit. For the first time, the SAM Summit went 100% virtual. Our distinguished presenters delivered must-see content on multiple topics related to marijuana. Some of our presenters included: Dr. Elinore McCance-Katz of SAMHSA, the United States Surgeon General, Dr. Jerome Adams, and SAM President & CEO, Dr. Kevin Sabet.



INTERNATIONAL LEADER ON DRUG POLICY; EDUCATING THE PUBLIC ON CUTTING-EDGE SCIENCE

- **Defeated legalization across 17 states**
- Helped pass the Medical Marijuana Research Act out of the Energy and Commerce Committee
- Had language seeking to raise awareness on drugged driving in states with “legal” marijuana markets included in a House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee bill, the Invest in America Act
- Had two pro-public health amendments added to the Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (CJS) appropriations bill:
 - One to restrict funding to states with “legal marijuana markets that have no education campaigns on marijuana impaired driving
 - One to reduce federal funding in any state with a marijuana market that allows high potency THC products in kid-friendly forms
- **Defeated the SAFE, MORE, and STATES Acts**
- Exposed Big Pot efforts to use the COVID-19 pandemic to its advantage:
 - Stopped Big Pot from receiving taxpayer-funded bailouts while bragging about record profits
 - Defeated efforts to include the SAFE Banking Act in COVID-19 aid packages
 - Succeeded in having Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and other high-ranking members of the Senate ridicule efforts to include giveaways to the pot industry in COVID-19 aid packages
- Formed SAM New Zealand affiliate and **successfully defeated a nationwide referendum to commercialize marijuana**
- Launched Industry Profiles page on SAM website
- Launched SAM “Towns & Cities Initiative” – Local Control Resource Center
- Launched #DecriminalizeDontLegalize campaign with IL NAACP
- Released most comprehensive SAM Impact Report yet
- Launched SAM Webinar Series covering wide range of marijuana topics for **over 2,000 attendees**
- SAM speakers conducted **over 100 in-person** and virtual speaking events

THE 116TH CONGRESS AND 17 STATES CHOSE SMART MARIJUANA POLICIES IN 2020

The 116th Congress completely rejected the pot industry's wish list. Whether it was the **SAFE Banking Act**, **STATES Act**, **MORE Act**, or the attempts by Big Marijuana to get taxpayer-funded COVID bailout money, SAM and our allies shut the door for two incredible years. In state legislatures, your efforts and donations led to **rejections of marijuana commercialization and passage of smart marijuana reforms in more than 17 states.**

Internationally, SAM-New Zealand decisively defeated a national referendum to legalize marijuana, overcoming a well-funded industry effort in the country. Germany and other nations followed in their rejections of legalization, as **SAM's international scope continues to grow.** Unfortunately, some states chose to commercialize marijuana via statewide referendums bringing the total to a paltry 15 states over the past 50 years of attempts. But these harmful policies were not without silver linings: Vermont became the first state in the country to **cap the potency of marijuana (at 60%).** Now calls to cap potency are resounding across other "legal" states, and SAM is already hard at work in those legislatures.

“
Thank
you”

Dr Mary Daly
General Practitioner
BHB MDCMB Dip Obs (AK) FRNZCGP

Thank you
New Zealand
for joining us
in saying *no.*

“
Ngā
mihi”

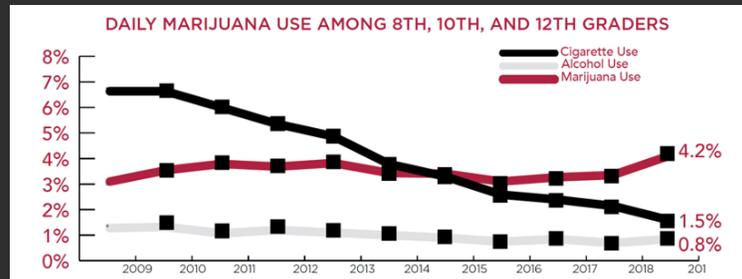
Rev Pane Kawhia
Minister, Rotorua
Ngāti Porou

“
Ngā
mihi”

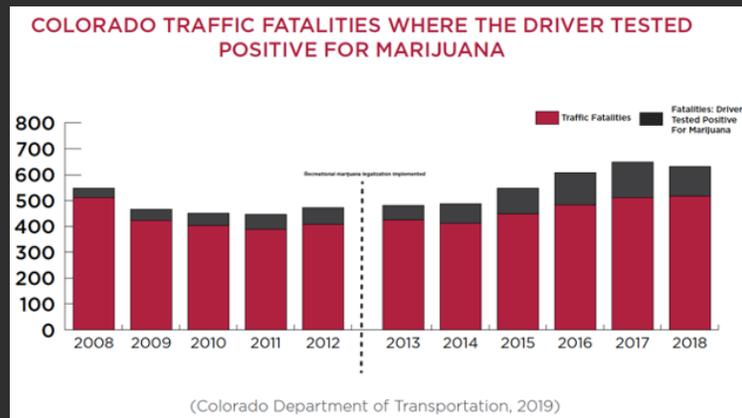
Hinga & Lloyd Whiu
Auahi Kore Ambassadors
Ngāti Hikairo/Ngāti Tahu/Waikato/Ngāipahi

Thank you. It's **Nope** to

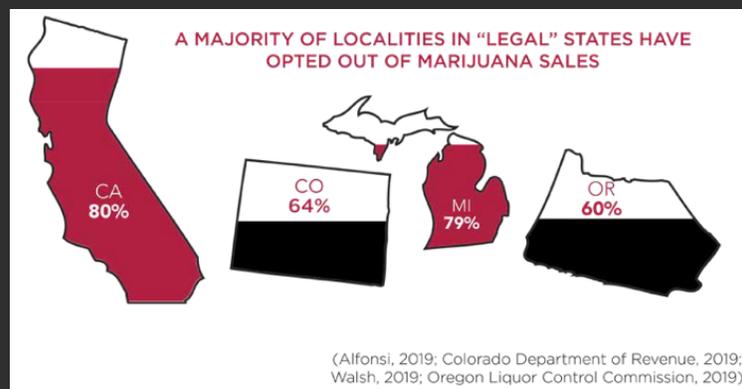
MAJOR SAM MARIJUANA DATA RELEASE HIGHLIGHTS



The latest data show marijuana use is increasing among youth while rates of use of other drugs are plummeting.



Colorado's experience continues to show us that marijuana commercialization leads to increases in fatal traffic accidents.



Local communities continue to opt-out and ban marijuana industry activity, undercutting the narrative that commercialization is popular.

A man in a grey suit and tie is speaking at a podium. He has a name tag on his lapel. In the foreground, the backs of several audience members' heads are visible, some with glasses of water on a table. The background is a plain wall.

SETTING OUR SIGHTS ON 2021

2020 saw global disruption and hardship for many, but public health education and advocacy were needed more than ever. SAM will continue its leadership in 2021.

Thanks to your support, SAM will expand upon its newly announced initiatives to fight for social justice, such as the [#DecriminalizeDontLegalize](#) campaign co-sponsored by the Illinois NAACP.

SAM's presence in states like New York, Connecticut, New Mexico and beyond has given rise to a broad array of new coalition partners, including the mighty New York State PTA and chapters of the NAACP. We will continue to build on these partnerships in 2021.

Given the nation's greater discussion of policy for drugs other than marijuana, SAM has been called upon to speak on these issues. In 2021, we will continue to be a leader in drug policy through initiatives to address them.

SAM DEVELOPED MORE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES THAN EVER IN 2020



A BAND-AID SOLUTION

On the surface, legalizing marijuana might sound like a good way to address issues of systemic injustice. At best, it's a band-aid solution. The reality is, marijuana legalization/commercialization exacerbates issues of systemic injustice by creating a predatory addiction-for-profit drug industry. This new addiction industry is already targeting communities of color like its predecessors Big Tobacco and the liquor industry have always done.

It's time for a new model in between the two extremes of incarceration and commercialization.



Will Commercialization Deliver Social Justice?

On the surface, legalizing marijuana might sound like a good way to address issues of systemic injustice. People of color are almost 6 times more likely to be arrested for all drugs, including marijuana, than whites.



We need a holistic approach that addresses the causes – not just the symptoms – of injustice. **Removing criminal penalties for marijuana possession as part of a comprehensive marijuana policy is a must.** Legalization, however, goes too far and creates a multi-billion dollar industry whose impact exacerbates many of the underlying contributors to systemic injustice.

The emerging data from states that have tried legalization offer three main reasons why legalization should be opposed as a tool for social justice: Incarceration. Commercialization. Reformation.

Below is a collection of resources we have put together that have been used across the country to push back on Big Pot. As it stands, the vast majority of communities in California, Colorado, and Michigan have banned marijuana industry activity. Many of these communities have used SAM's resources to accomplish this.

Download The Local Control Resource Toolkit DOWNLOAD HERE

<p>The Impact Report</p> <p style="border: 1px solid white; padding: 2px 10px;">DOWNLOAD HERE</p>	<p>Marijuana Quick Facts</p> <p style="border: 1px solid white; padding: 2px 10px;">DOWNLOAD HERE</p>	<p>The Colorado One-Pager</p> <p style="border: 1px solid white; padding: 2px 10px;">DOWNLOAD HERE</p>
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SAM DEVELOPED MORE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES THAN EVER IN 2020

SAM Smart Approaches to Marijuana
preventing another big tobacco

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COVID-19 has rapidly spread throughout the world and though there is some confusion about the details of the disease and its spread, one thing is certain: **there are populations within the United States that are particularly vulnerable.** Among these vulnerable populations, reports the National Institutes on Health and **National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)**, are individuals who smoke or vape marijuana, or have a history of smoking or vaping marijuana.

Underlying respiratory issues are a serious risk factor for negative outcomes from COVID-19. NIDA reports that "Because it attacks the lungs, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 could be an especially serious threat to those who smoke tobacco or marijuana or who vape."

- A report published by the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reviewed data from China and found that the case fatality rate for COVID-19 was 6.3 percent for people with chronic respiratory disease, compared with 2.3 percent overall (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2020).
- Deaths and serious illness from COVID-19 have been concentrated among vulnerable populations. NIDA reports, that it "is therefore reasonable to be concerned that compromised lung function or lung disease related to smoking history, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), could put people at risk for serious complications of COVID-19."
- NIDA also reports that vaping can harm lung health just as smoking can, and as such, people who vape can be exposed to increased risk from COVID-19.
- In 2019, the country experienced a vaping crisis in which as many as 2,739 people were hospitalized and 68 people died (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). The more than 2,700 people who were hospitalized and suffer from residual complications associated with vaping-related lung illness are at an increased risk of severe COVID-19.

SAM Smart Approaches to Marijuana
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YOUTH USE

(Monitoring the Future, 2019)

Near daily marijuana use surpassed near daily cigarette use in 2015

ALC: Alcohol Use (per year)

4.2%
2.4%
1.5%
0.8%

2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019

—Cigarette Use —Alcohol Use —Marijuana Use

Young people use more potent marijuana, more often.

- Near daily marijuana use among 8th, 10th, and 12th graders increased 26.3% from 2018 to 2019 (Monitoring the Future, 2019).
- Studies show youth vaping of any kind increases the risk of future marijuana vaping, presenting another risk amid a youth vaping epidemic (Kovitt et al., 2019).
- Young people report vaping marijuana in increasingly large numbers since such data was first recorded in 2017 (Monitoring the Future, 2019).
- Marijuana vaping delivers more potent forms of marijuana through vaporized concentrates, which can contain as much as 95% THC.

Marijuana use among young people in "legal" states is alarmingly high.

- Past year and past month marijuana use among 12 to 17 year-olds in "legal" states increased around 5.3% each from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018 (NSDUH State Comparisons, 2019).
- Past year and past month marijuana use among 18 to 25 year-olds increased nearly 4.4% each from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018 (NSDUH State Comparisons, 2019).
- While 23.8% of 12 to 17 year-olds in non-legal states perceive a risk from smoking marijuana once a month, only 17.4% in "legal" states perceive such a risk (NSDUH State Comparisons, 2019).
- One study found cases of Cannabis Use Disorder (CUD) in young people in "legal" states grew 25% following legalization (Cerde et al., 2019).

2017/2018

April 12-17 April 18-25

NSDUH State Estimates, 2018

Recent data show nearly **9.2 million** young people aged 12 to 25 used marijuana in the past month (2018). Past month marijuana use is indicative of frequent use. (NSDUH, 2019)

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Marijuana & Addiction Recovery: It's Time To Talk About It

The marijuana industry claims their products are not addictive. But millions of people know better.

Help Spread The Truth

Here are some tweets you can use to spread awareness:

Marijuana addiction is real. Let's put public health over profit. <https://bit.ly/1RWn6FN>

More kids are in treatment for pot today than all drugs combined according to the Treatment Episode Data Set <https://bit.ly/3lCpWVN> #TheMoreYouKnow #PeopleBeforeProfit

Jordan's Story

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Allow marijuana retail sales
Allow "medical" marijuana - smoked
Allow "medical" marijuana - non-smoked
Do not allow recreational or "medical" marijuana

SAM, THE LEADING VOICE AGAINST MARIJUANA COMMERCIALIZATION

What your support has helped us accomplish this year:

- **Over 4,000 media mentions** including top outlets such as: the New York Times, the Chicago Tribune, USA Today, the Associated Press, The Wall Street Journal, New York Post, Denver Post, the Philadelphia Inquirer, Fox News, NBC News, and Politico
- **40+ opinion pieces** placed in **more than 25 publications** nationwide
 - Increased social media presence
 - **1.6 million** tweet impressions
 - **34,768** profile visits
 - **14,608** twitter mentions
 - **1,009** new followers
 - Secured a monthly column on drug policy in Newsweek
- Highlighted twenty-one new scientific studies and releases of new data on marijuana use and illicit markets
- Praised the Food and Drug Administration for taking action against marijuana business claiming their products could prevent and/or cure COVID-19
- Supported the first implementation of a marijuana potency limit in the country (Vermont)
- Launched new resources that
 - expose addiction industry investments into Big Marijuana
 - offer a comprehensive breakdown of state marijuana laws
 - serve as a compendium for the latest research on marijuana

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SAM and SAM Action

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