

APA Official Actions

Position Statement on Need to Monitor and Assess the Public Health and Safety Consequences of Legalizing Marijuana

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“Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees. . . These are . . . position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects. . .” – *APA Operations Manual*

APA Position:

The APA strongly urges the Congress and the President to direct the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services to establish coordinated, interagency mechanisms to monitor and measure the health and safety consequences of policies enacted by states that legalize cultivation, distribution, and possession of marijuana for medical or recreational use and to fund relevant research. Particular attention should be paid to states that legalize recreational use, and to the effects of medical legalization on the prevalence and consequences of recreational use, especially among children and adolescents. Essential elements of the federal interagency initiative should include:

- Identifying the key outcomes related to the health and safety consequences of legalization and the best available measures of these outcomes.
- Identifying the elements of the state’s regulatory approach, its administration, and enforcement that may affect health and safety outcomes, and the best available measures of those regulatory elements.
- Recommending necessary actions by federal agencies, or by the Congress, designed to ensure that states legalizing marijuana collect and report the data needed to monitor and measure the health and safety consequences of their policies, and that they take precautionary steps to ameliorate adverse health and safety consequences.
- Providing and/or expanding funding mechanisms through the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other appropriate federal agencies to support research on the health and safety consequences of marijuana legalization.
- Recommending changes to the Controlled Substances Act and other federal laws and policies needed to ensure that federal oversight of the cultivation, distribution and possession of marijuana is adequate to control interstate commerce in marijuana and to protect the health, safety and welfare of the American people.

Authors: Members, Council on Addiction Psychiatry and Council on Psychiatry and Law. See also the related resource document.