

FAMILY FYI

By the Council for Prevention
Of Alcohol and Substance Abuse

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Medical Marijuana *Myths* and Facts

YES, there *are* some states who have adopted laws allowing the use of medicinal marijuana. California was the first state to allow the use of prescribed marijuana, yet in the most recent elections the people of California voted down a proposition to legalize marijuana, despite their troubled economy and promises of supporters that legalization would bring revenue. Everyday there are news items about the problems states with medicinal marijuana are facing with regulation, shifting social norms, and -----.

Here are some basic facts about marijuana, laws, and medicine.

- Despite any state laws that may exist, according to **federal law** marijuana is illegal in the United States for any purpose, and federal agents can and will seek out and prosecute users of this drug.
- In New York attempts to have medicinal marijuana legislation pass have failed and marijuana is illegal for any reason.
- There is no medication which has been approved by the FDA which is *smoked*.
- Marijuana has NOT been approved by the FDA nor undergone the lengthy testing and trials required of all legal medications. The use of medicinal marijuana has been pushed through legislative avenues rather than the scientific and medical process.
- Marijuana results in memory loss, distorted perception, difficulty thinking and problem solving, loss of motor skills, increased heart rate and anxiety, and slow reaction time.
- Marijuana weakens the immune system.

- Smoking one marijuana joint is like breathing hundreds of chemicals including carcinogens and tar – far more than cigarette smokers.
- Marijuana’s potency is higher today than ever before.
- Vehicle accidents by those under the influence of marijuana have been rising as has the number of emergency room visits related to marijuana use.
- There are already existing, legal, prescription medications able to address the medical conditions supporters of marijuana mention.
- The movement to allow the use of medicinal marijuana appears to be funded by pro-legalization groups as an overall strategy to completely legalize marijuana and other drugs.
- Legalization of marijuana in other countries has not been successful.
- Marijuana is a gateway drug, often leading to other drug use. The risk of using cocaine is 104x greater among marijuana users.
- Inaccurate, partial, and overblown information has filtered down to youth affecting their perception of the safety, legality, effects, and medical value of marijuana.
- Marijuana **CANNOT** cure cancer, restore sight, halt the progress of AIDS or provide other medical benefits.

It is up to parents, communities, and schools to provide clear, factual messages about marijuana to help balance the inaccurate and persuasive messages by organizations financially backed by groups which support drug use and general legalization. These groups are trying to buy a shift in social thinking. *Don't be fooled.*