

## Case for Comprehensive Coalition Drug Prevention Programming for Marijuana and all illicit drugs

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1. Heroin users start with other drugs; New data shows 90% of heroin users had an earlier connection with marijuana.
2. Marijuana is a **gateway drug** leading to many forms of future illicit drug use. If we can convince young people, especially very young people, that marijuana is dangerous, they will be much less likely to use illegal drugs in the future.
3. Right now Michigan residents are about to vote on making one of the **most potent marijuana plants in history** legal. This will impact every citizen in every town in the state. More people will use marijuana; more kids will follow their parent's examples and see the drug as harmless (otherwise, why would an adult use the drug?).
4. This will come at great cost to our communities in terms of police costs, litigation, lost business revenue, and the need to establish expanded treatment and prevention capabilities.
5. Right now seven City Commissioners have proposed a new expansive marijuana production program for the city: It is called the **Medical Marijuana Facilities Ordinance**; It will bring major grow operations into the city and include at least **13 drug dispensaries** that intend to sell a lot of marijuana. In other states, and in Traverse City, medical dispensary operators have violated the law and sold pot out the back door to underage customers (and been arrested for it).
6. THC, the psychoactive, mind-altering drug in marijuana is 30-50Xs stronger than it was in the 1970s with average THC levels of 30 to 40% with some edibles and oils going to 90 and 95% THC.
7. Cannabis is often thought to be the least harmful and of little interest to public health, in spite of the fact that evidence in recent years has shown that the use of cannabis can create remarkable levels of harm.
8. The most probable adverse effects of cannabis use include **dependency, increased risk of motor vehicle accidents, impaired respiratory function, cardiovascular disease and adverse effects of regular use on adolescent psychosocial development and mental health.**
9. Marijuana is the dominant drug for use and treatment in the U.S and other countries.
10. If marijuana becomes legal in the state, our **roads will be more dangerous** than they already are, especially in the alcohol centers of Northwest Michigan.
11. Right now we need to take what steps we can to prevent our state from legalizing a dangerous drug...
12. But we must **push ahead with a comprehensive community prevention plan**, which takes into account the use and distribution of *all* illegal drugs to protect our children and make the community and region a safer, more pleasant place for everyone.

**The time to educate our public is fast running out**; failure to conduct a concentrated local and all-state drug education program focusing on the dangers of marijuana and other drugs, will result in Michigan **becoming the 10<sup>th</sup> state with legalized marijuana!** What follows may well be chaos, broken families, smelly communities, drug tourism, costly litigation, troubled schools—and worst of all—addicted young people.

**If we fail now to take a strong stand, as a group and individually with only weeks to go, we put our state, our children, and ourselves at great risk.**  
**What we do now could make a difference!**