

Good day lawmakers,

I have practiced for 20 years in VT as a primary care pediatrician, mainly in South Burlington, also notably at Woodside Juvenile Rehabilitation Center from 2008-2010.

Over the years the access to and use of 'weed' among young people has climbed steadily. The 2024 YBRS cites 6% of middle schoolers as vaping anything and 4% as using marijuana, but I suspect the percentage is higher based on my conversations with pre teens and teens. I had a ten year old patient using cannabis most days a few years back. Most people, kids especially, smoke cannabis, vs. take an edible, which damages their lungs as well as gets them into the habit.

https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/document/hsi_yrbs_middle_school_2023_executive_summary.pdf

Most high school kids I talk to about access tell me that there is usually a source in school and in the parking lot/car line after school. True for buying a vape or cartridge or new 'dab pen' with cannabis or a 'mole'(cannabis plus nicotine). Everyone knows where to get it and, sadly, occasionally they get it from their parents. Access to weed is not the main problem, of course, but a contributing variable. Hopelessness, too many screens, anxiety and depression, parental mental illness and addiction, social isolation and or chronic absenteeism all contribute to becoming psychologically dependent on cannabis and/or using most days.

The regular marijuana use path in a young person, middle school to young adult, never ends with a productive, inspired, lively, physically and emotionally available adult ready to work hard in Vermont and help their community.

It's gnarly - there is missed school, polydrug use, vomiting, nausea, weight loss, more vomiting and poor sleep and concentration. And LOTS of emergency department(ED) visits for intoxication, the puking, the other drugs and alcohol that end up being mixed with weed; we all know it's tough going in the ED and this makes it harder for people to get in for care.

I worry about these kids because they convince themselves they need it and that it is not harmful.

Our culture of cannabis and the economy of smoking smells bad and harms kids.

Please curb expansion of cannabis sales in our communities. It's easy enough to buy weed in Vermont these days.

Vote NO on 278!

Thank you for your hard work and dedication to our communities,

Your constituent and devoted child health advocate,

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