



Take Action to Promote Public Health Protections & Equity in Recreational Marijuana Policy

The Massachusetts legislature is working to move an omnibus marijuana bill on the Governor's desk by June 2017. Now is the time to act to ensure public health protections in recreational marijuana policy.

1. Call or email the chairs of the Joint Committee on Marijuana Policy

Please contact Senate Chairwoman Patricia Jehlen and House Chairman Mark Cusack and ask that the legislature take steps to advance equity, protect youth and promote public health.

Chairwoman Patricia Jehlen: p. 617-722-1578, e. Patricia.Jehlen@masenate.gov

Chairman Mark Cusack: p. 617-722-2637, e. Mark.Cusack@mahouse.gov

2. Provide testimony at an upcoming public hearing

March 27th, 4 PM, West Springfield High School Auditorium, 425 Piper Rd, West Springfield

April 3rd, 11 AM, State House, Rooms A-1 and A-2, Boston

April 10th, 4 PM, Shrewsbury High School Auditorium, 64 Holden St, Shrewsbury

Massachusetts Public Health Association Recommendations on Marijuana Policy

Promote Equity and Address Racial Disparities

- 1. Expunge criminal records for possession of marijuana of one ounce or less:** Stark racial disparities in the enforcement of marijuana prohibition have been well documented. The legalization of recreational marijuana should include efforts to reverse the repercussions of discriminatory enforcement of prohibition. Please support SB1075/HB2785, *An Act relative to the expungement of convictions for marijuana possession*, by Sen. Lewis and Rep. Vega.
- 2. Promote racial equity in the new recreational marijuana industry:** While communities of color have been unfairly targeted in the enforcement of marijuana prohibition in Massachusetts and across the country, once marijuana is legalized, members of the communities most impacted by marijuana prohibition should be able to access wealth building and job opportunities in the legal industry. Please support equal opportunity to this new industry by: a) stipulating that the Treasurer's Office, in coordination with the Cannabis Control Commission, implement policies to ensure that all Massachusetts residents are afforded equal business opportunities; and b) authorizing the Supplier Diversity Office to create opportunities for marijuana-related businesses to qualify as Minority Business Enterprises or Women Business Enterprises.

Prevent Youth Use

- 3. Dedicate funding for youth prevention:** Research shows that because adolescents' brains are still developing, regular youth use of marijuana is associated with learning and memory challenges, increased risk of mental health problems, and lower academic performance. Legalization of marijuana has been shown to decrease perception of risk among youth. Please support SB1097/HB2382, *An Act to prevent adolescent substance use* by Sen. Flanagan and Rep. Malia. This legislation establishes an Adolescent Substance Use Prevention and Early Intervention Trust Fund and allocates 3% of excise taxes from the sale of recreational marijuana to support evidence based and evidence informed adolescent substance use prevention programs.
- 4. Enact strong labeling and packaging standards for edibles:** Marijuana edibles pose unique risk to children who may mistake marijuana edibles for food or candy. Strong packaging and labeling standards are needed to prevent accidental ingestion of marijuana edibles by children and teens and to provide transparent information for adult consumers. Please support SB1077/HD3420, *An Act relative to marijuana product packaging and labeling* by Sen. Lewis and Rep. Kane.
- 5. Place restrictions on misleading and exploitative advertising:** The newly created recreational marijuana industry is likely to follow the playbook of big tobacco through the use of advertising and promotional tactics that target vulnerable populations, including children. Restrictions are needed to prevent misleading or exploitative advertising by the industry. Please support SB1067/HD3592, *An Act further regulating marijuana commercialization* by Sen. Lewis and Rep. Kane.

Include General Public Health Protections

- 6. Increase the tax rate to cover regulatory costs and prevention investments:** The current tax level on recreational marijuana (a maximum of 12%) is unlikely to cover the full cost of regulating and implementing the new industry. We ask that the legislature raise the tax level on recreational marijuana to a level sufficient to cover the costs of implementation and regulation of the new industry and to cover the costs of youth prevention investments and data collection.
- 7. Protect local control and reasonable local health regulation:** The responsibility for enforcing the legalized marijuana industry will significantly impact local boards of health. We ask that the legislature authorize municipalities to issue local permits for recreational marijuana facilities and to enact reasonable regulations on recreational marijuana facilities and businesses. We also ask that the legislature prohibit any further restrictions on local control.
- 8. Require robust data collection and analysis:** Baseline and ongoing data collection is necessary to track the public health, racial equity and safety consequences of the legalized recreational marijuana industry. Please support SB1072/HD3411, *An Act relative to marijuana research, data collection, and best practices* by Sen. Lewis and Rep. Kane.