

## Marijuana: Bad News for Our Kids

Brought to you by the Tri-Town Council Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition

**Why? In Massachusetts more kids are admitted to treatment for marijuana use than all illegal drugs combined.**

### What's the big deal?

Marijuana is the most widely abused illegal drug among teens, and more teens now smoke marijuana than tobacco. Marijuana has many adverse health and safety risks – more than people are aware. Here are the facts:

- Marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug.
- Marijuana is the most prevalent illegal drug detected in impaired drivers, fatally injured drivers, and motor vehicle crash victims. Just like drinking and driving, drugged driving is serious and can have tragic outcomes.
- Marijuana smoke contains 50-70 percent more carcinogens than tobacco smoke, contributing to the risk of cancer of the lungs, mouth and tongue.
- In the past 15 years, the potency of Marijuana (THC content) has more than tripled from 3% to more than 11%.
- Teens that smoke marijuana regularly demonstrate up to an 8-point IQ drop in early adulthood, compared to teens that do not smoke.
- **Rates of teen marijuana use in Massachusetts are already 30% higher than the average for the nation.**

***Invested, caring adults are our best strategy in preventing youth drug use. Help prevent youth marijuana use. Talk to your tweens and teens often and discourage marijuana use.***

**Together we can make a difference.  
[www.tritowncouncil.org](http://www.tritowncouncil.org)**

### What's at stake in Massachusetts?

- A "medical" marijuana system that would allow 35 marijuana retail stores throughout Massachusetts, five per county, the number could grow in the future. (To compare: Vermont has 2 dispensaries state-wide and Maine has 8; both states' dispensaries are locked facilities with access by appointment only).
- Marijuana being sold in the form of food products, tea, candy, lollipops, aerosols, and more. Any one over the age of 21 can apply to open a pot shop; no medical training needed.
- People carrying up to a 60-day supply (quantity undefined) on their person.
- No minimum age stipulation for obtaining a "medical recommendation." Even children could obtain a card allowing them to purchase and possess marijuana. There is no expiration date on a "medical recommendation."
- Two FDA approved marijuana-based drugs already exist that can be prescribed to chronically ill patients. Ingesting in pill form does not put patient's health at risk, ingesting carcinogens while smoking does.
- Between 2010 and 2011, Colorado saw an explosion in the number of pot shops as a result of "medical" marijuana legislation, many operating close to schools.

**For more information on pending legislation in Massachusetts, go to the MA Attorney General's website <http://www.mass.gov/ago/>**