



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Safeguards for cannabis needed to protect youth

Ottawa, ON (September 14, 2017) – The legalization of cannabis in Canada has the potential to enhance safety and quality control, but appropriate safeguards are needed. As the federal government moves forward with legalization, the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) has prepared a series of recommendations to help mitigate harm to Canada’s youth.

Cannabis is the most commonly used illicit drug in Canada, with highest use among those ages 15-24. The literature shows cannabis can have harmful effects, particularly among adolescent users. For example, the use of cannabis has been associated with impaired verbal learning, memory, and attention and can disrupt normal adolescent brain development. Cannabis has also been linked with an increased risk for the onset of some mental disorders like psychosis, depression, and bipolar disorder.

“The legalization of cannabis must be accompanied by public education about the known risks associated with its use,” says Dr. David Teplin, Chair of the CPA task force on cannabis. “There are important gaps in what is known about the use and abuse of cannabis, and the federal government should invest in further research to address these gaps.”

The CPA also recommends that harm reduction approaches to the treatment of problematic use of cannabis be made available. Given the concomitance of substance use and mental disorders, psychological treatments must be made available as well.

“We have long been concerned about the inaccessibility of evidence-based psychological treatments for mental and substance use disorders across the country because these interventions are inadequately resourced by our public and private health insurance systems. The legalization of cannabis will bring about increased tax revenue for governments that could be allocated to prevention and treatment of these common disorders,” says Dr. Karen Cohen, CEO, CPA.

Read the CPA’s full position paper, [*Recommendations for the Legalization of Cannabis in Canada*](#).

About the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA)

The CPA is the national association for the science, practice and education of psychology in Canada. To learn more, visit www.cpa.ca.

Press inquiries should be made to:

Stephanie Miksik, Communications Coordinator

Phone: 888-472-0657 ext. 337

Cell: 613-462-3997

smiksik@cpa.ca