



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES  
Behavioral Health and Service Integration Administration  
Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery  
PO Box 45330, Olympia, WA 98504-5330

July 2, 2014

Dear Prevention Partner,

Now that marijuana is legal for adults ages 21 and over in Washington State, it is important that we increase our efforts to educate parents, youth and other community members about the restrictions and penalties in the new law, and the health and safety risks of marijuana for young people. Reducing underage marijuana and alcohol use are the highest priorities in Washington State's Strategic Prevention Plan. Community health and safety organizations, health care providers, educators, law enforcement, and families are vital in achieving these goals.

The Washington State Healthy Youth Survey is conducted every two years with students in grades 6, 8, 10 and 12. During the 2012 survey, responses from 10<sup>th</sup> grade students about their attitudes and use of marijuana revealed that:

- 51% believe it is easy to get.
- 29% believe there is little or no risk in using regularly – up from 23% in 2008.
- 17% believe adults don't think it's wrong for them to use.
- Most are not using marijuana; however, 19% did use it during the previous month. This is almost double the percentage of students who smoked cigarettes (10%) and slightly less than students who drank alcohol in the past 30 days (23%).

The survey also showed that students who use marijuana are more likely to get lower grades compared to those who don't use. The growing evidence that regular and prolonged marijuana use can impair learning and memory in teens and young adults, and the increasing number of teens who don't think marijuana use is risky, is a call for increased action.

The Department of Social and Health Services - Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR) is pleased to provide the enclosed **Underage Marijuana Use Prevention Toolkit**. Several partners were involved in developing and reviewing the contents of the Toolkit, including the Liquor Control Board, the state Department of Health, Seattle Children's Hospital, the U.W. Social Development Research Group, and Mercer Island Youth and Family Services. The information will empower parents in using proven prevention strategies, knowing the signs of marijuana use, and getting help if their child is using marijuana.

The toolkit contains the following resources:

1. A prevention guide for parents: [\*Now that marijuana is legal for adults in Washington\*](#), developed by Seattle Children's Hospital, and adapted for statewide distribution.

2. An info card, [\*Know the Facts/What Parents Need to Know\*](#), about the impacts on youth and the legal restrictions for adult use, developed by the Washington State Liquor Control Board.
3. [Talking points](#) for communicating key messages to parents and teens through social media and other online content, news releases and letters to editors, and presentations.
4. An [overview of state agency roles](#) in implementing I-502, and agency contacts.
5. A video, *Marijuana and Teens After I- 502*, developed by Mercer Island Youth and Families. Available online at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=051fjuFcnaU>.
6. [Marijuana education ads](#) for use as posters, in publications, and online, created by BestCare Prevention and localized for Washington State by DSHS. Available online.

To download the contents of the Toolkit, and order printed copies of the parent's guide and info card, visit DBHR's prevention publications page:

<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/dbhr/dapreventionpub.shtml>.

In addition to the Toolkit, we recommend these web sites for fact sheets and other resources:

- [www.AskHys.net](http://www.AskHys.net): For printing local and statewide fact sheets with data from the Washington State Healthy Youth Survey.
- [www.StartTalkingNow.org](http://www.StartTalkingNow.org): For facts about underage drinking and marijuana use, and prevention tips for parents.
- [www.TheAthenaForum.org/marijuana](http://www.TheAthenaForum.org/marijuana): DBHR's website for prevention professionals.
- [www.WARecoveryHelpLine.org](http://www.WARecoveryHelpLine.org): Funded by DBHR for 24-hour emotional support and referrals to treatment services.
- [www.LearnAboutMarijuanaWA.org](http://www.LearnAboutMarijuanaWA.org): The University of Washington's webpage for marijuana research and education.

Thank you for the valuable work you do each day for the health and safety of Washington's youth and families.

Sincerely,



Sarah Mariani, Behavioral Health Administrator  
Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery