

Press Release

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### **SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: Rising Concern Over Marijuana Use with Opioids**

A new study published in the Journal of Addiction Medicine shows that sufferers from chronic pain who use marijuana in conjunction with prescription opioids demonstrated higher instances of mental health issues and further substance abuse problems than those who used opioids alone. According to the study, instances of depression and anxiety as well as opioid addiction, alcohol, and cocaine use were higher in patients who used both drugs. Additionally, there was no reported difference in pain for either groups.

"Once again, another study completely shreds the arguments perpetuated by marijuana lobbyists that legalization can help solve the opioid epidemic," said Dr. Kevin Sabet, president of Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM) and a former senior drug policy advisor to the Obama Administration. "As previous research has shown, marijuana use by those suffering with pain usually results in the necessity to prescribe more, stronger medications as marijuana lowers pain thresholds. Simply put, lawmakers must stop rushing ahead of the literature when it comes to expanding the use of this drug and possibly adding fuel to the addiction fire that is devastating our communities."

Proponents of marijuana legalization often claim that the commercialization of the drug can help buffet the current opioid epidemic. This study, in concert with another recent study in the Journal of Addiction Medicine conducted by Dr. Keith Humphries which found marijuana users more likely to abuse prescription opioids, deflates those arguments. Researchers maintain the results are not surprising and indeed replicate other studies showing that cannabis use by pain patients is associated with higher doses of opioids and no pain relief benefits. This is one of many examples where claims about the benefits of medical cannabis are not supported by evidence. Conversely, evidence does show that marijuana - which has skyrocketed in average potency over the past decades is addictive and harmful to the human brain especially when used by adolescents. In states that have already legalized the drug, there has been an increase in drugged driving crashes, youth marijuana use, and costs that far outweigh pot revenues. These states have seen a black market that continues to thrive, sustained disparities in marijuana arrest rates, and tobacco company investment in marijuana.

The Journal of Addiction Medicine is the official peer-reviewed journal of the American Society of Addiction Medicine, is to promote excellence in the practice of addiction medicine and in clinical

research as well as to support Addiction Medicine as a mainstream medical sub-specialty. For more information please visit <https://www.asam.org/resources/publications/journal-of-addiction-medicine>.

Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM) is a nonpartisan, non-profit alliance of physicians, policy makers, prevention workers, treatment and recovery professionals, scientists, and other concerned citizens opposed to marijuana legalization who want health and scientific evidence to guide marijuana policies. SAM has affiliates in more than 30 states. For more information please visit [www.learnaboutsam.org](http://www.learnaboutsam.org).

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition is conducting an opioid prevention awareness campaign entitled, "Keeping Glen Cove SAFE," in order to educate and update the community regarding opioid use and its consequences. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on [www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition](http://www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition) or visit SAFE's website to learn more about the Opioid Epidemic at [www.safeglencove.org](http://www.safeglencove.org).