

Press Release

March 20, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Dr. Sharon Harris

516- 676-2008

safeglencove@yahoo.com

SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: Teens Should Be Aware of High Potency Marijuana

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), legal marijuana is now available with very high concentrations of THC, some as high as 20%. They are considered to be “designer marijuana products”, new and lacking research on long-term negative consequences of its use. However, the initial reports are very concerning. High-THC cannabis is linked to a multitude of health problems, including cannabis hyperemesis syndrome (uncontrolled vomiting), anxiety, psychosis, suicide, and addiction. That’s in addition to more established risks of teen marijuana use, such as problems with learning, attention, and memory.

Researchers at the Institution for Social and Policy Studies at Yale University, maintain that today’s marijuana isn’t the same plant it was decades ago. It is a product genetically created to have very high concentrations of the psychoactive substance THC, then further extracted and concentrated to form a much higher potency product. When someone smokes marijuana, the highest THC concentration possible is 30 to 35 %. Marijuana concentrates now can have 90 to 99% THC.

The potency of illicit marijuana plants has increased over time, from about 4 % in 1995 to 15 % in 2021. A massive industry has developed over the past 10 years to addict young brains which develop until the age of 25. The legalization of marijuana is causing confusion with youth as they are misperceiving it as unharmed, unlike cocaine or heroin. Research indicates THC binds to receptors in the brain and body, which triggers the high- quite similar to the way opioids work and developing tolerance which requires continued and increased use of the drug is the same for THC users. THC resembles a natural body chemical called anandamide, which “tricks” the body’s receptors to allow THC to bind and cause changes to what the receptors normally do. THC can cause a thinning in the brain’s prefrontal cortex, equivalent to the loss of 6 to 8 IQ points. Additionally, there are links between marijuana and mental illness. Today’s high-potency marijuana has been found to increase the risk of psychosis and schizophrenia by a factor of five. For daily users of cannabis under age 15, one in 20 would develop schizophrenia during their lifetime.

SAMHSA maintains it is critical that the public be made aware of the potential harms associated with high potency marijuana use, especially in teens as 1 in 3 people who have used high potency marijuana in the past year meet the criteria for addiction or cannabis use disorder.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is a branch of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is charged with improving the quality and availability of treatment and rehabilitative services in order to reduce illness, death, disability, and the cost to society

resulting from substance abuse and mental illnesses. For more information about SAMHSA please visit www.samhsa.gov.

SAFE is the only alcohol and substance use prevention agency in Glen Cove. Its Coalition is concerned about marijuana use- especially in youth as their brains are developing. The Coalition is conducting a prevention awareness campaign entitled "Keeping Glen Cove SAFE; Underage Marijuana Use," to educate and update the community regarding marijuana use and its negative consequences. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE's website to learn more about Marijuana use at www.safeglencove.org.