

# Marijuana Prevention Initiative

Our Marijuana Prevention Initiative works to defeat marijuana legalization in Massachusetts, including marijuana purported “medical”. Through this initiative, the Alliance will educate Massachusetts citizens on the unintended and unforeseen consequences of policies, such as those that increase youth access, decrease perception of risk, and set a dangerous precedent of approving medicine through political means, rather than through the regulated, safe and scientifically-based FDA process.

## *The Threat*

In 2008, Massachusetts voters approved decriminalization of the possession of up to an ounce (up to 120 joints) of marijuana for personal use. Under the law, possession by an individual results in a fine of \$100 plus mandatory education for minors. Current efforts to further legalize marijuana use and expand its availability in Massachusetts, include:

- Proposed legislation to fully legalize marijuana
- Proposed legislation to legalize “medical marijuana” and make it available through 19 state-sanctioned distribution centers (pot dispensaries)
- Efforts to pass a Statewide Ballot Initiative legalizing “medical marijuana” and creating 35 state-sanctioned distribution centers (Nov. 2012)

**The Harm** (A complete list of the research and related evidence is available.)

The short- and long-term effects of using marijuana are well documented:

- Short-term effects include: cognitive dysfunction and impairment, increased risk of injuries, and drugged driving.
- Long-term effects include: impaired adolescent brain development, effects to the respiratory system, mental illness and addiction.

ANY efforts to increase and legalize the availability and use of marijuana will exacerbate the harms to our youth and communities. States that have allowed the cultivation and the sale of marijuana for “medicinal” purposes have experienced:

- Increased use of marijuana by youth ages 12-25 - directly linked to increased availability
- Decreased “perceived harm” of marijuana use, leading to increased use by youth ages 12-18
- Increased drugged driving arrests
- Increased crime - especially in states with sanctioned distribution centers, or “dispensaries”

## *Our Response*

The Massachusetts Prevention Alliance monitors the progress of the marijuana legalization efforts, educates the community on issues linked with legalization, and provides a space for concerned Commonwealthers to address these issues.

For information on how to get involved please contact **Massachusetts Prevention Alliance**:

Email: [info@mapreventionalliance.org](mailto:info@mapreventionalliance.org)

Website: [www.mapreventionalliance.org](http://www.mapreventionalliance.org)