

**Fwd: please share with the AC**Mike Sandman <[msandman@brooklinema.gov](mailto:msandman@brooklinema.gov)>

Wed 10/13/2021 2:34 PM

**To:** Lisa Portscher <[lportscher@brooklinema.gov](mailto:lportscher@brooklinema.gov)>**Cc:** Alok Somani <[ninetyouth@yahoo.com](mailto:ninetyouth@yahoo.com)>; Susan Park <[mrssusanpark@yahoo.com](mailto:mrssusanpark@yahoo.com)>

Hi Lisa -

Please distribute this to the AC and post it.

Mike

Mike Sandman

TMM3 &amp; Advisory Committee chair

[msandman@brooklinema.gov](mailto:msandman@brooklinema.gov)

+1.617.513.8908 - mobile &amp; text

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Susan Park <[mrssusanpark@yahoo.com](mailto:mrssusanpark@yahoo.com)>**Subject: Re: please share with the AC****Date:** October 13, 2021 at 11:44:15 EDT**To:** Mike Sandman <[msandman@brooklinema.gov](mailto:msandman@brooklinema.gov)>**Cc:** Alok Somani <[ninetyouth@yahoo.com](mailto:ninetyouth@yahoo.com)>

Hi Mike,

Dr. Anjini, a practicing internist and college physician asked me to share this letter to all Brookline leadership. Would you please pass on to the full AC.

Thank you,  
Susan Park  
TMM2

Dear Town Meeting Members and other Brookline leadership,

I would like to thank you for your service to our community. I appreciate your time and dedication to our town.

I would like to express my concerns regarding the proposed increased number of marijuana dispensaries and the potential for the future marijuana consumption cafes in Brookline. I support a cessation or a pause in granting licenses to open further dispensaries.

I know that you share your concern with me to have the best future for Brookline and its vulnerable populations including youth under age 18, young adults and disadvantaged minority populations.

As an Internal Medicine and college health physician, Brookline resident for 27 years and parent, I have seen a disproportionate rise of marijuana use disorder in young people in the last several years.

I wish to give you some background information on marijuana use from the medical literature.

Teenagers and young adults are disproportionately affected by cannabis use disorder which is addiction to marijuana. Research data will lag years behind current active trends due the time it takes to medically validate and publish research. There has also been for many years limited availability of marijuana to laboratory investigators because it is a federally illegal substance. More data is likely forthcoming in the next several years, however in the interim, there is a risk to all our communities as we learn more about potential harms to our own citizens including our youth here in Brookline.

Because the use of cannabis is highest in mixed race or Black or African American persons, having more dispensaries puts these vulnerable populations at risk. At the same time, all races are at risk, as the highest cannabis use disorder (addiction) is seen in males in high income areas. The data shows that cannabis use varies with age, with the highest prevalence is among 18- to 25-year-olds. In 2016, the mean age of the first-time cannabis user was 19.4 years old. Men are significantly higher users than women, and cannabis use is much more prevalent among those of mixed race, black or African American and native Americans compared to those of white (non-Hispanic) origin, Asian origin or Hispanic origin. An estimated 13.1 million individuals world-wide had moderate-severe cannabis use disorder in 2010, a point-prevalence of 0.19 percent. "Prevalence was greatest in young adult (20 to 24 years old) males living in high-income regions." [1].

"The potency of cannabis has increased around the world in recent decades, which may have contributed to increased rates of cannabis-related adverse effects. Cannabis use disorder develops in approximately 10 percent of regular cannabis users, and may be associated with cognitive impairment, poor school or work performance, and psychiatric comorbidity such as mood disorders and psychosis." [1]

There are multiple risk factors associated with substance use disorders including community risk factors such as laws and norms favorable towards alcohol and drug use, availability and access to alcohol and other drugs. [2]

A JAMA Research letter from December 17th, 2019, illustrated trends and reported marijuana vaping among US adolescents from 2017 to 2019. This letter illustrates a significant rise in marijuana vaping between 2018 and 2019. There was a significant absolute increase among 12th graders for the past 1-month use. The type of marijuana the students were taking was vaped marijuana which is marijuana heated to very high temperatures leading to significantly higher concentrations of THC, the psychogenic chemical in marijuana, responsible for its physical and psychological effects.[3].

There is also a very concerning association between marijuana use, self-harm and death. In a recent JAMA Pediatrics research article of January 19th, 2021, titled "The Association of Cannabis use with Self-harm and Mortality risk among use with Mood disorders", there was a clear association in youths between cannabis use disorder as a risk marker for self-harm, all-cause mortality and death by unintentional overdose as well as homicide among youths (children under age 18) with mood disorders. The authors recommend that these findings should be considered by communities contemplating legalizing medical and recreational use marijuana, as both of which are associated with increased cannabis use disorder. [4].

These facts regarding marijuana use among young adults and youths under the age of 18 are the tip of the iceberg, as research is only just begun regarding the effects of marijuana on the wellbeing of youths and young adults in our communities. No racial communities are immune from cannabis use disorder (addiction) and there is detrimental increased use in persons of minority racial backgrounds including mixed race and Black persons [1].

Please consider these factors as you make your decision regarding the availability of marijuana dispensaries and future consumption cafes in Brookline and their future impact on the community--that may be very costly in the long run.

Sincerely,

Anjini Virmani, MD

27 Whitney St  
Chestnut Hill  
[anjiniv@gmail.com](mailto:anjiniv@gmail.com)

Sources:

1. UpToDate is the clinical decision support resource accessed by more than 1.3 million clinicians worldwide. Wolters Kluwer Health, 230 Third Avenue, Waltham, MA 02451, 1.800.998.6374 (US & Canada) tel.

[Cannabis use and disorder: Epidemiology, comorbidity, health consequences, and medico-legal status.](#)

2. UpToDate is the clinical decision support resource accessed by more than 1.3 million clinicians worldwide. Wolters Kluwer Health, 230 Third Avenue, Waltham, MA 02451, 1.800.998.6374 (US & Canada) tel.

: [Substance use disorder in adolescents: Epidemiology, pathogenesis, clinical manifestations and consequences, course, assessment, and diagnosis](#)

3. [https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2757960?utm\\_source=undefined&utm\\_campaign=content-shareicons&utm\\_content=article\\_engagement&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_term=092421](https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2757960?utm_source=undefined&utm_campaign=content-shareicons&utm_content=article_engagement&utm_medium=social&utm_term=092421)

4. [https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/article-abstract/2775255?utm\\_source=undefined&utm\\_campaign=content-shareicons&utm\\_content=article\\_engagement&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_term=092421](https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/article-abstract/2775255?utm_source=undefined&utm_campaign=content-shareicons&utm_content=article_engagement&utm_medium=social&utm_term=092421)

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