Policy Brief: CSAM-SMCA in Support of the Decriminalization of Drug Use and Possession for Personal Use

https://policybase.cma.ca/link/policy14443

POLICY TYPE
Policy endorsement

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Pharmaceuticals, prescribing, cannabis, drugs
Population health, health equity, public health

Introduction

Provision of safe, legal access to cannabis is an essential part of any population-based approach to reducing harm from drug use. This approach is similar to strategies used to address the harms associated with opioid use and other drugs of misuse. Policies to support the safe and legal provision of cannabis need to be developed and implemented in a way that prevents the criminalization of drug users and reduces the harms associated with the illicit market.

Evidence that demonstrates the effectiveness of legal cannabis markets includes:

- Lower rates of drug-related deaths and overdoses
- Lower rates of criminal justice involvement
- Increased access to medical cannabis
- Improved health outcomes for users

Conclusions

The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) calls on the federal government to decriminalize drug use and possession for personal use. This means that cannabis use should be a matter of personal choice, not a criminal offense.

The CMA also calls on the federal government to provide resources to support the transition to a legal market, including:

- Education and training for health care professionals
- Support for public health campaigns
- Access to cannabis products

The CMA recognizes the need for ongoing research and evaluation of the impact of decriminalization on public health and social outcomes.

Endnotes


