Legalization, regulation and restriction of access to marijuana
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Response to consultation

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Pharmaceuticals, prescribing, cannabis, drugs

CMA Submission
Legalization, Regulation and Restriction of Access to Marijuana

Government of Canada – Task Force on Marijuana
Legalization and Regulation

August 29, 2016

STATEMENT | DÉCLARATION

Chair Statement - Implementation

Difficult, September 9, 2016 – The CMA’s submission to the Task Force on Marijuana: Legalization and Regulation emphasizes the importance of public health in the formulation of policy. The distribution of marijuana without sufficient medical, public health, and public safety considerations could lead to unexpected adverse consequences.

The CMA takes a public health approach to the issue of cannabis control and legalization. Our approach is based on the principles of evidence-based decision-making, priority setting and harm reduction philosophy. Such an approach is consistent with the Canadian Medical Association’s Guidelines for the Safe Medical Use of Marijuana (2016).

At the same time, the CMA recognizes the need to balance the public’s desire for access with the need to protect vulnerable populations, particularly youth.

It is clear that the government must ensure that the public’s health needs are addressed and that provisions are in place to protect the public’s health and safety.

The CMA recommends that the federal government take the following steps to protect public health:

- Developing and implementing an education campaign to stress the importance of responsible use of marijuana;
- Establishing a framework that includes access to medical marijuana for patients;
- Developing a comprehensive strategy to reduce the risk of marijuana use by children and adolescents;
- Ensuring that marijuana products are available only through licensed dealers;
- Promoting public health awareness campaigns to prevent the use of marijuana.

The CMA recommends that the government consider the following measures to protect public health:

- Implementing a national strategy to reduce the use of marijuana;
- Establishing a system of regulation and enforcement to ensure that marijuana is only obtained through licensed dealers;
- Providing support for research on the effects of marijuana use.

The CMA is committed to ensuring that the public’s health needs are addressed and that provisions are in place to protect the public’s health and safety.

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