July 11, 2017

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
H-305, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Culberson  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies  
H-310, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable José Serrano  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen, Ranking Member Lowey, Chairman Culberson, and Ranking Member Serrano:

We, the undersigned, representing medical societies, drug prevention organizations, treatment centers, and other public health professionals write to urge you to reject the inclusion of marijuana policy amendments in the Fiscal Year 2018 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

We are strongly in favor of scientifically sound medical research to discover new treatments that can be proven safe and effective through clinical trials and approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). We also support compassionate early access programs for those with intractable diseases that do not respond to other medications. There are several promising new medications coming to market that are derived from compounds found within the marijuana plant.

But modern medicine requires that medications are proven to be safe and effective, and that they are standardized, dosed, and produced in accordance with Good Manufacturing Practices. “Whole plant” marijuana currently sold in states with medical marijuana programs has not been proven to be safe or effective as a treatment for any medical condition, and its production does not meet the rigorous standards we apply to all other marketed pharmaceuticals. Medical marijuana programs allow the commercialization and sale of high-potency marijuana flower, extracts, and edibles that have not been tested or approved for the treatment of any illness. Even so, for-profit companies advertise marijuana as a cure for conditions as varied as cancer, depression, PTSD, headaches, insomnia, and morning sickness.

Worse still, marijuana use is associated with many known health problems: cognitive impairment, reduction in IQ, psychosis (schizophrenia), addiction and withdrawal, and increased risk of crashes while driving or injuries in the workplace. In particular, for adolescents and children whose brains are still developing, the harms of marijuana are magnified as the drug causes long-lasting changes in the brain. Finally, marijuana has been shown in
animal studies to cross-sensitize the brain with opioids\textsuperscript{viii}. Marijuana users are three times more likely to use heroin, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Preventions (CDC)\textsuperscript{ix}.

We should fast-track and provide compassionate access to legitimate, FDA-approved medications that can help suffering patients with intractable illnesses. But current medical marijuana programs circumvent the safeguards of FDA review and approval. We urge you to reject that approach and let science and research inform public health.

Sincerely,

American Association of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP)
American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM)
Caron Treatment Centers
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA)
COPES, Inc.
Drug Free America Foundation
Drug Free Schools Coalition
Drug Prevention Resources
Mainers Protecting Our Youth and Communities
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals
National Association for Children of Addiction (NACoA)
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD)
National Families In Action
National HIDTA Directors Association
Rosenthal Center for Addiction Studies
Smart Approaches to Marijuana Action (SAM Action)
Save our Society from Drugs
The College on Problems of Drug Dependence

\textsuperscript{iii} Radhakrishnan R, Wilkinson ST, D’Souza DC. Gone to Pot - A Review of the Association between Cannabis and Psychosis. \textit{Front Psychiatry}. 2014;5:54.
\textsuperscript{viii} Cadoni C, Pisanu A, Solinas M, Acquas E, Di Chiara G. Behavioural sensitization after repeated exposure to Delta 9-tetrahydrocannabinol and cross-sensitization with morphine. \textit{Psychopharmacology (Berl)}. 2001;158(3):259-266.
\textsuperscript{ix} Centers for Disease Control and Preventions. \url{https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/heroin/infographic.html} Web. 30 June 2017.