

Marin IJ Readers' Forum for Nov. 27, 2020

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Sausalito beware, today's cannabis is different

Sausalito officials are considering licenses for the first retail recreational cannabis storefront in Marin County. If passed, it will add fuel to the fire of our current epidemic of teen drug use.

As director of the Marin County Youth Court for the past 16 years, I have become familiar with teen drug use. I am often asked to speak as a subject expert on teen drug culture at parent education events, school assemblies and teen wellness conferences.

I know better than anyone that it's always been easy to get pot here. During the 1960s and 1970s, Marin was a mecca for hippies and rock 'n' rollers, as well as the drug scene that came with them. The THC content of marijuana during those years ran from 2% to 5%.

This is different. I've never seen anything like it in terms of the potency, delivery systems, flavors and how quickly it is hooking our kids. I no longer consider marijuana to be a "soft" drug. I believe high potency THC is addictive and, in some instances, can trigger onset of a psychotic break.

I get it. It's not always convenient to drive over the bridge to one of the more than 20 dispensaries in San Francisco, or to the medical dispensary in Fairfax or to have it delivered to your home.

But, are we willing to trade convenience for the health and well-being of our youth? The data is clear on the impact of alcohol and tobacco outlets on youth use. It increases it. Early data is showing the same for corporate cannabis outlets. Please Marin, let's take a community-minded approach to this one. Place societal well-being over individual wants while we wait until the data is clear that we will be inflicting no additional harm on the youth in Marin.

— *Don Carney, San Rafael*