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NEW CDC REPORT CONFIRMS DIRECT LINK BETWEEN LEGAL CANNABIS AND VAPING ILLNESSES

**FINDS 82% OF VAPING ILLNESS PATIENTS USED A CANNABIS PRODUCT;
AT LEAST 1 IN 6 THC-RELATED VAPING ILLNESSES CAUSED BY
PRODUCTS PURCHASED FROM LEGAL SOURCES, DISPENSARIES**

**STATE PUBLIC HEALTH LEADERS AND PHYSICIANS URGE
LAWMAKERS TO RETHINK PUSH FOR LEGAL ADULT USE**

Albany, New York, January 17, 2020 — A troubling new report from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has confirmed a direct link between legally obtained adult use cannabis and the nation's outbreak of vaping related illnesses and deaths.

The study, www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6902e2.htm?s_cid=mm6902e2_w, found that the vast majority (82 percent) of patients suffering from a vaping illness had used a cannabis product. The study further found that at least one in six cases (16 percent) of reported THC-related vaping illnesses were caused by cannabis products purchased from legal sources, including dispensaries. Additionally, the study found 78 percent of the THC-related illnesses were linked to cannabis products that the user obtained from family, friends and other sources, some or much of which may have also been initially acquired from legal sources.

"The science is now perfectly clear: legalized cannabis is making Americans sick and it will make more New Yorkers sick if we rush into a legal adult use program," said Daniel J. Stapleton, MBA, President of the New York State Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO) and Public Health Director in Niagara County. "To approve legalized adult use cannabis at a time when we know it is making people gravely ill abandons our first obligation of protecting the public."

MSSNY President, Arthur Fougner, MD, said, "MSSNY has longed urged that New York State proceed cautiously in its attempts to legalize the recreational or so-called "adult use" of marijuana. This recent report from the CDC now indicates that the vast majority of cases of vape-related lung illness are linked to the vaping of THC, from not only illicit sources but also from some legally procured marijuana. The bottom line is vaping any substance is NOT safe at this

time and we must ensure that all citizens in New York State are protected by ensuring that the state continues to prohibit the use of recreational marijuana.

Another state proposal related to adult use cannabis calls for establishing a Cannabis Research Center, which, according to the 2020 State of the State briefing book, will emphasize determining “what is safe, what is effective, and what parameters define healthy and safe dosing.”

Stapleton added: “While we agree with the need for more detailed research, we are concerned that the state’s own Cannabis Research Center proposal acknowledges that we don’t know enough to enact a safe program. Moreover, what we do know indicates a provable threat to public health. We need to hit the pause button now before we cause further harm to our communities.”

In response to the CDC’s findings, the state’s public health officials and physicians are calling on policy makers to stage their activities by first authorizing the research center proposal this year, and then consider legalization once the critical research the center will pursue is conducted and formal recommendations can be made.

“It just makes sense to understand the implications and dangers before we act,” said Stapleton.

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