



Dear Legislator,

7/17/2019

MVA is dedicated to supporting victims harmed by the marijuana industry and the normalization and promotion of the marijuana culture. We inform the public, government officials and legislators of the personal damage that marijuana causes.

The STATES Act (S. 1028 by Warren/Gardner and H.R. 2093 by Blumenauer/Joyce) WILL CAUSE MORE MENTAL ILLNESS INCLUDING PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS AND SUICIDES.

Marijuana use can cause impairment of memory, attention, motor skills, reaction time, and the integration of complex information and impaired cognition and other neurological damage. [1]

The American Psychiatric Association reports that current evidence supports, at a minimum, a strong association of marijuana use with the onset of psychiatric disorders. “Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to harm, given the effects of cannabis on neurological development.” [2]

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) research shows that marijuana use is linked with depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts among teens. [3]

In 2017, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) landmark report written by top scientists concluded after a review of over 10,000 peer-reviewed academic articles, that marijuana use is connected to mental health issues such as psychosis, social anxiety, and thoughts of suicide and learning, memory, and attention loss (possibly permanent in some cases). [4]

A new study shows that young people with marijuana dependence have altered brain function that may be the source of emotional disturbances and increased psychosis risk that are associated with marijuana abuse. The alterations were most pronounced in people who started using marijuana at a young age. The findings reveal potential negative long-term effects of heavy cannabis use on brain function and behavior. [5].

References

[1] Abbie Crites-Leoni, Medicinal Use of Marijuana: Is the Debate a Smoke Screen for Movement Toward Legalization? 19 J. Legal Med. 273, 280 (1998) (citing Schwartz, et al., Short-Term Memory Impairment in Cannabis-Dependent Adolescents, 143 Am. J. Dis. Child. 1214 (1989)).

[2]. American Psychiatric Association, 2013 “Position Statement on Marijuana as Medicine,” paragraph 1 found at: <https://www.psychiatry.org/home/policy-finder>

[3]. [https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana August 2017](https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana%20August%202017)

[4]. Health Effects of Cannabis and Cannabinoids: Current State of Evidence and Recommendations for Research. See: <http://nationalacademies.org/hmd/~media/Files/Report%20Files/2017/Cannabis-Health-Effects/Cannabis-chapter-highlights.pdf>

[5] <https://www.news-medical.net/news/20180116/Study-reveals-negative-long-term-effects-of-heavy-cannabis-use-on-brain-function-and-behavior.aspx>
3/2018



My son is a marijuana victim. Marijuana killed his soul and ruined his brain. His suicide note makes that very clear.

Andy Zorn was a happy, resourceful kid with big dreams. He realized some of them, working and saving and planning his future. He served in the U.S. Army as a paratrooper with 82nd Airborne. He earned an AA degree at community college after his discharge in 2004.

But Andy had experimented with marijuana and alcohol at age 14. Perhaps that is when a foundation was laid for his not being tolerant of the substance as an adult. By age 25 he was exhibiting signs of psychosis and fearing suicide.

The six years that followed were a nightmare of calls to suicide help lines resulting in involuntary stays in county behavioral health hospitals, court ordered mental health treatment, loss of his right to own a weapon due to the danger he was to himself. He lost his ability to hold a job, continue in school, to keep his home.

The Veterans Administration had also treated him and of course suspected PTSD but Andy never agreed with that. He had no symptoms of PTSD, mainly just severe depression and the diagnosed Severe Cannabis Use Disorder.

Andy was arrested in Arizona for marijuana possession, one of the best things that happened to him in those years because it afforded him the incentive to be clean and sober in a court diversion program that opened a window in his addicted mind and allowed him a shot at recovery and re-entry into a productive life. He reconnected with family and friends he had isolated from in his addiction.

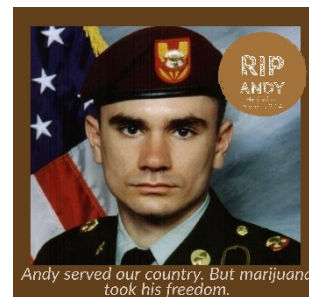
Sadly though, when the drug testing stopped, the marijuana addiction took him right back. Andy easily obtained an Arizona medical marijuana card, claiming pain in a leg that had once been broken. That afforded him access to a regular supply of potent product that owned his mind.

I spoke with the marijuana dispensary manager about Andy's death and his severe addiction. I did that with the hope she would help the next person like Andy recognize the harms and risks of the product. But she said she would not because it is not addictive, and Andy must have been using another substance. Andy was not. His toxicology report proves that.

As long as this marijuana industry is allowed to operate in this reckless way, there will be more marijuana victims. I offer Andy's Story with the dream that his words in his suicide note will resonate with someone who cares enough to help save the next victims. Marijuana killed his soul plus ruined his brain.

Please help stop this insane rush to build this industry marketing a harmful and risky substance, promoting its use, misleading young people into believing it is harmless. We victims are being left in its wake.

I will only get worse. My soul is already dead. Marijuana killed my soul & ruined my brain. I am doing everyone a favor.



**Thank you for your consideration,
Sally Schindel, Andy's Mom, Arizona**

MVA Marijuana Victims Alliance
MVAA.info MVAAAlliance@gmail.com