

JAN 23 2025

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO CANNABIS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that marijuana, also
2 known as cannabis, is a plant with psychoactive properties
3 derived primarily from its main psychoactive component
4 tetrahydrocannabinol. From available data, there is a general
5 agreement that cannabis use is not healthy for young people, and
6 therefore, addressing cannabis use among youth is a major public
7 health concern. Exposures of cannabis to children and
8 adolescents have increased and so has the significant risk for
9 permanent neuropsychiatric changes with cannabis use in
10 childhood. Accordingly, physicians, parents, and children alike
11 need to be aware of these risks.

12 The legislature further finds that, except for some
13 refractory epilepsy and seizure disorders, there is no
14 established beneficial use of cannabis in children. There is,
15 however, extensive evidence for serious, permanent harm on
16 developing brains, including cognitive impairment,
17 underdeveloped decision-making capacity, and functional



1 impairment in attention and memory. The United States Centers
2 for Disease Control and Prevention warns that cannabis use
3 impairs youth brain development for decades and that thinking,
4 memory, and learning deficiencies may be permanent and are
5 linked to teen suicide, depression, and social anxiety.
6 Additionally, studies show that youth using cannabis face a
7 fourfold increase in psychosis diagnoses in adulthood and there
8 is increased risk for the early onset of psychiatric conditions
9 such as schizophrenia. The long-term effects of cannabis use
10 are greater for teens than adults. For example, youth with an
11 ongoing cannabis use disorder lost an average of eight
12 intelligence quotient points between ages thirteen and
13 thirty-eight. Early youth use of cannabis can also lead to
14 cannabis use disorder, suicidal ideation, poor school
15 performance, increased high school dropout rates, and negative
16 effects on male fertility.

17 The legislature additionally finds that cannabis is
18 addictive, especially for adolescents because their brains are
19 still developing and vulnerable. Adolescents who start using
20 cannabis before the age of fourteen are four times more likely
21 to become addicted by the time they are adults. Approximately



1 three in ten people who use cannabis have cannabis use disorder.
2 The risk of developing cannabis use disorder is stronger in
3 people who start using cannabis during youth or adolescence and
4 who use cannabis more frequently.

5 The legislature finds that it is critical that Hawaii
6 reassures the community that there are prevention practices in
7 place to protect youth from the potential harm of cannabis use
8 and community efforts to prevent high-risk behaviors when
9 children and teenagers begin using cannabis. Youth cannabis use
10 prevention is also important for families due to the increase in
11 youth hospitalizations for hallucinations, nausea, and seizures
12 due to pediatric ingestions of cannabis primarily occurring at
13 home. Prevention programs are best when combining a community
14 focus on social norms and economic conditions with support from
15 schools, health administrators, health care professionals, child
16 advocacy groups, parent associations, and local officials.
17 Adolescent substance misuse prevention involves strategies and
18 programs aimed at reducing the risk of young people using or
19 misusing drugs, alcohol, and other substances. Prevention
20 efforts focus on addressing the factors that increase



1 vulnerability to substance use while promoting protective
2 factors that foster healthy development and resilience.

3 The legislature also finds that there are informational
4 media campaigns and evidence-based prevention strategies already
5 developed that communities could implement to prevent youth
6 cannabis use, such as public education, public policy
7 development, environmental scans, data monitoring, and community
8 collaborations. Gathering data can aid in assessing and
9 developing local strategic planning processes to identify the
10 factors that are contributing to youth cannabis use and related
11 issues. Therefore, Hawaii needs to increase its prevalence of
12 prevention services. The legislature believes that an
13 informational campaign is needed to inform youth that cannabis
14 use is much more damaging to them than adults. Hawaii should
15 follow other states who have developed short-term media
16 campaigns, increased prevention, and added more resources for
17 youth treatment relating to cannabis use. Through prevention
18 and education, families and youth can learn positive family
19 factors to build trust for developing a protective role in
20 preventing youth cannabis use.



1 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require the
2 alcohol and drug abuse division of the department of health to:

3 (1) Develop and implement a comprehensive messaging and
4 informational campaign to prevent cannabis use among
5 the State's youth; and

6 (2) Enter into contracts with community-based
7 organizations to award grants to prevent substance
8 misuse among youth through evidenced-based prevention
9 programs.

10 SECTION 2. (a) The alcohol and drug abuse division of the
11 department of health shall develop and implement a comprehensive
12 messaging and informational campaign to prevent cannabis use
13 among the State's youth. The campaign shall include media
14 regarding youth use of cannabis and its impact on public health
15 and safety.

16 (b) The alcohol and drug abuse division of the department
17 of health shall establish and enter into contracts with
18 community-based organizations to award grants to prevent
19 substance misuse among youth through evidenced-based prevention
20 services.



1 (c) The department of health shall submit a report of its
2 findings and recommendations to the legislature no later than
3 twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of
4 2027. The report shall include:

5 (1) How funds received pursuant to this Act have been
6 expended;

7 (2) The specific service providers involved in
8 implementing this Act;

9 (3) The number of persons who have been engaged by the
10 informational campaign or have received prevention
11 services;

12 (4) A description of the services provided;

13 (5) Measurable outcomes; and

14 (6) Any proposed legislation.

15 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
16 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
17 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and
18 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
19 year 2026-2027 for the development and implementation of the
20 informational campaign to prevent cannabis use among the State's



1 youth and to enter into contracts to prevent substance misuse
2 among youth.

3 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
4 of health for the purposes of this Act.

5 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

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INTRODUCED BY:





S.B. NO. 1527

Report Title:

DOH; ADAD; Informational Campaign; Prevention Services; Report; Appropriations

Description:

Requires the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division of the Department of Health to develop and implement a comprehensive messaging and informational campaign to prevent cannabis use among the State's youth. Requires the Division to establish and enter into contracts with community-based organizations to award grants to prevent substance misuse among youth through evidenced-based prevention programs. Requires a report to the Legislature. Appropriates funds.

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