



Ohio Children's Hospital Association
Saving, protecting and enhancing children's lives

OFFICIAL STATEMENT

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The following statement can be attributed to Nick Lashutka, President, Ohio Children's Hospital Association at the press conference announcing a coalition to oppose legalization of non-medical marijuana in Ohio:

On behalf of the members of the Ohio Children's Hospital Association – Akron Children's Hospital, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, Dayton Children's, Nationwide Children's, ProMedica Toledo Children's Hospital and UH/Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital – and the children we serve, I am here today to voice our strong opposition to this ballot initiative.

Our mission is simple: save, protect and enhance the lives of our state's most precious asset – our children. Ohio's children's hospitals have some of the most advanced research work in the world when it comes to pediatric safety – and we rely on this research when making decisions about the public policy issues that impact Ohioans.

We believe making marijuana readily available in our state will put children's lives at unnecessary risk – and that is why we stand united here today in opposition.

Under this proposal, common baked goods, candies, and sodas—all infused with marijuana and all nearly impossible to differentiate from a non-marijuana-infused product— would be legally available for purchase by adults 21 years of age and older. Many of these marijuana edibles look and feel just like treats you might find in many kids' lunch boxes: gummy bears, goldfish crackers, Swedish fish, or peanut butter cups. And most of these edible marijuana products can be tremendously intoxicating, even at the manufacturer-recommended consumption levels for adults. It takes just one time for one of these items to be left within a child's reach to harm a child. Simply google "Marijuana Bakery" and look at the images that pop up – dramatic, colorful displays of cupcakes, brownies, suckers and other treats that would be indistinguishable from a non-infused product from a child's point of view.

In fact, Colorado, where many of these photos are taken, is experiencing significant increases in poison control hotline calls from parents and increased emergency department visits for young children due to accidental ingestions of marijuana. The study conducted by Nationwide Children's Hospital clearly indicates a correlation between the legalization of marijuana and the accidental ingesting of it, particularly by young children under 3, which can lead to difficulty breathing, seizures and even coma.

Additionally, in Ohio, we continue to be challenged with high infant mortality rates – in fact, some of the highest in the country – and smoking marijuana during pregnancy has been shown to decrease birth weight, most likely due to the effects of carbon monoxide on the developing fetus.

Given the facts, this proposal is bad for our state and bad for our children. We hope Ohioans will join us in protecting our kids and vote NO in November.

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More information about the Ohio Children's Hospital Association is available at ohiochildrenshospitals.org.
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