

Dear Mayor Knapp,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to express my concerns and opposition regarding the establishment of marijuana dispensaries in our community.

As the substance abuse coordinator and counselor for Ontario Schools I am deeply concerned about the potential negative impacts that these dispensers may have on our community and more importantly on our students.

The issue of increased accessibility is the first thing that has me very concerned. With dispensaries in close proximity, it becomes easier for minors to obtain marijuana, despite age restrictions. This raises significant concerns about the potential for increased underage use and associated health risks. The brain is not fully developed until the age of 25. The use of marijuana during adolescence and young adulthood may harm the developing brain. The negative effects include: difficulty thinking and problem solving, problems with memory and learning, reduced coordination, difficulty maintaining attention, problems with school and social life. Marijuana in a teen or young adult life has also been linked with a range of mental health problems, such as depression and social anxiety.

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns regarding this topic. We need students today to be more engaged and social at school events and other activities. I fear the impact of the dispensaries could jeopardize our students' futures. I appreciate your dedication to our school and our students.

Sincerely,

Cathleen Johnson  
Ontario substance abuse coordinator/counselor