

~~DRAFT~~

# Nutrition, Mental Health and Naturally Occuring Substances: KMHC Position Paper

**POSITION:** The Kansas Legislature must adopt consistent public policy that allows citizens holistic nutrition and health maintenance choices partly by eliminating naturally occurring substances that have nutritional value from the Controlled Substances Act, ie cannabis. This action will give agricultural producers another commodity to enlist for income, a new revenue source for the State and further freedom and choice to Kansas citizens in their access to preventative, mitigative and operational mental and physical healthcare.

**THE PROBLEM:** Diets high in refined sugars, trans fat and other processed foods are harmful to the brain, yet are not regulated as such. In addition to worsening your body's regulation of insulin, most, also promote inflammation and oxidative stress. Multiple studies have found a correlation between a diet high in refined sugars and impaired brain function — and even a worsening of symptoms of mood disorders, such as depression. Carbohydrates increase serotonin, a brain chemical that has a calming effect. Perhaps that's why people often crave carbohydrate-rich foods when they are under stress. Protein-rich foods increase tyrosine, dopamine, and norepinephrine, which help to increase alertness. In addition, certain healthy fats (omega-3 fatty acids) become part of the membranes of brain cells and control many brain processes. Poor nutrition or lack of a variety of healthy foods can contribute to depression by limiting the availability of these specific nutrients.

**WHY THIS MATTERS:** Children who lack nutritious food are subject to the toxic stress experienced in families struggling to find enough money for rent and food. Children going without enough nutritious food are also more likely to be absent from school, suffer from hyperactivity, and do less well in school and develop lifestyle eating habit that continue throughout life. It makes sense. If your brain is deprived of good-quality nutrition, or if free radicals or damaging inflammatory cells are circulating within the brain's enclosed space, further contributing to brain tissue injury, consequences are to be expected. What's interesting is that for many years, the medical field did not fully acknowledge the connection between mood and food.

**THE BOTTOM LINE:** The field of Nutritional Psychiatry is relatively new, however there are observational data regarding the association between diet quality and mental health across countries, cultures and age groups – depression in particular. Whole plants, such as cannabis, can be another tool in the fight of disease and should be taken off the controlled substance list

**NEED MORE INFORMATION?** Drill deeper into this issue on the back of this page.

Nick Reinecker [nicholasleereinecker@gmail.com](mailto:nicholasleereinecker@gmail.com) Inman, Kansas Citizen