

(Draft)KMHC Position Paper: Cannabis(Draft)

Position: Regardless of federal block grant funding requirements, cannabis as a controlled substance in the state of Kansas is a stumbling block to the goals and mission of the KMHC.

The Problem:

Cannabis possession is a criminal offence due to its designation as a Schedule 1 substance and therefore presents a gateway into the criminal justice system. This dilutes the debate about parity and stigma and further hinders access to services for those who are truly in need of them.

Why This Matters:

Improving the lives of Kansas with or without a currently accepted nosological referral source diagnosis will be facilitated by taking away the criminal aspect of cannabis possession. Eliminating the "public safety threat" and isolating the public health education and voluntary services could potentially mean more people may choose to access health services without fear and/or coercion. This action will also free up public safety resources for those more immediate threats to public safety such as individuals who engage in violent behavior, regardless of substance involvement.

The Bottom Line:

Cannabis is not a lethal nor a benign substance, however, the damage that has been done due to its exclusive prohibition cannot be minimized and this coalition believes that regardless of a regulatory structure for the commercialization of cannabis and cannabis products, cannabis should be de-scheduled from the state controlled substances act.