

# Maine Chapter

INCORPORATED IN MAINE

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



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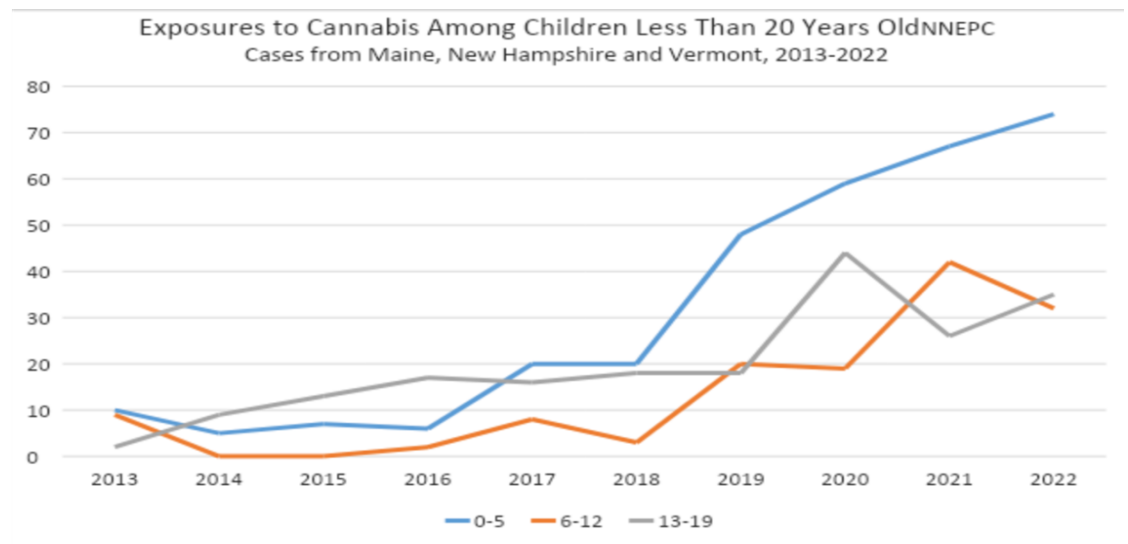
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Testimony in Opposition to LD 2147 by Dr. Deborah Hagler on Behalf of the Maine Chapter of the AAP “An Act to Remove the Requirement for Edible Cannabis Products to Be Stamped or Embossed on Each Serving with a Universal Symbol.”

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee. I am Dr. Deborah Hagler. I have practiced pediatrics in the Mid Coast region for the past 26 years. I am the immediate President of The Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. I reside in Harpswell.

The family was awoken at about 1 am with unfamiliar noises from their toddler's bedroom. The parents found their child rolling around in the toddler bed, making odd noises. The child did not seem to pay attention to the parents being there. They discovered some vomit on the floor and then abruptly the youngster's eyes rolled back, and the child began shaking. Several hours later after another couple of seizures in the emergency department the emergency room physician told the distressed parents the child had been poisoned by cannabis and was being admitted for observation to the intensive care unit and a mandated report would be filed to the state child welfare team. It turned out the babysitter had not realized the brownie she had given the child before bed was laced with cannabis.

Evidence suggests that more youth are seeking care for accidental cannabis ingestions both nationally<sup>1</sup> and in Maine. Since 2017 calls to the New England Poison Center have increased dramatically amongst all age ranges especially among youth less than 6 years of age.



Data Provided by the Northern New England Poison Center

I think we can all agree that we want to keep cannabis out of the hands of kids and prevent the potentially very serious consequences of cannabis poisoning.

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Policy experts are putting forward recommendations.<sup>2</sup> The most effective strategies would utilize a host of mechanisms- including proper storage, child proof packaging, accurate labeling with clear indications **on the product** and its label that the contents contain THC .

Baked goods, candies and chocolate bars just look delicious to a toddler and to the caregiver but brownies and other baked goods can all look alike. Some type of marking on the product further distinguishes that this contains a potentially toxic substance and serves to prevent sharing of an opened treat( piece of chocolate/cookie etc.) with a very vulnerable portion of the population is a key part of prevention. The cost to provide a stamp for a brownie or emboss a candy bar is likely less than the average daily pediatric ICU stay of approximately \$5,595/day.<sup>3</sup> This of course does not incorporate parent lost time from work or any of the other myriad factors that accompany the trauma of a pediatric hospitalization.

Canada legalized non-medical use of cannabis in 2018 and focus groups in Canada indicate that adults are interested in safe use and protecting children. This information is welcome by those using non-medical cannabis.<sup>4</sup>

LD 2147 removes an important tool for the protection of children from accidental ingestions. The Maine Chapter strongly opposes this bill.

1.Boadu O, Gombolay GY, Caviness VS, El Saleeby CM. Intoxication from Accidental Marijuana Ingestion in Pediatric Patients: What May Lie Ahead. *Pediatr Emerg Care*. 2020 Jun;36(6):e349-e354. doi: 10.1097/PEC.0000000000001420. PMID: 29406477.

2. Matheson J, Le Foll B. Cannabis Legalization and Acute Harm From High Potency Cannabis Products: A Narrative Review and Recommendations for Public Health. *Front Psychiatry*. 2020 Sep 23;11:591979. doi: 10.3389/fpsy.2020.591979. PMID: 33173527; PMCID: PMC7538627.

3.Hsu BS, Lakhani S, Brazelton TB 3rd. Relationship Between Severity of Illness and Length of Stay on Costs Incurred During a Pediatric Critical Care Hospitalization. *S D Med*. 2015 Aug;68(8):339, 341-4. PMID: 26380427.

4. Ventresca M, Elliott C. Cannabis edibles packaging: Communicative objects in a growing market. *Int J Drug Policy*. 2022 May;103:103645. doi: 10.1016/j.drugpo.2022.103645. Epub 2022 Mar 9. PMID: 35276401.