



## Promoting Health and Wellness in our Community

October 2022

Rhode Island recently joined neighboring Massachusetts and Connecticut in legalizing marijuana. I believe it's important for us to consider the potential impact to the health and safety of our kids. In addition to increased access to marijuana through retail sales, two challenges we face are rapid expansion of the edibles sales and the rise in popularity among youth to use vaping devices as a discreet way to use marijuana.

Edible products are cleverly made to look like everyday snacks that people, including children, are attracted to such as brownies, gummies, flavored drinks, and chips. With Halloween around the corner, adults should pay extra close attention to the treats their kids bring home. Data from the American Association of Poison Control shows that in the first half of 2021, over 2,600 calls were made to poison control hotlines about young children consuming cannabis products. Children who'd been exposed to marijuana edibles accounted for 80% of calls to the Poison Control Center in the first nine months of 2020.

As the ways to consume marijuana grows, the threat to our kids' health and safety also increases. We see in the news how popular vaping has become among teens, and how they are using this easy-to-conceal method to get high. In one article I read, adolescents reported a preference for vaping marijuana extracts (THC oils, etc.) over smoking marijuana to get an increased buzz. THC is the main ingredient in marijuana that produces the high.

Now that marijuana legalization is a reality, communities need to act responsibly and keep the focus on what is best for our kids going forward.

Sincerely,  
Anne Schultz