

# Legal Access to Non-Medical Cannabis: Approaches to Protect Health and Reduce Harms of Use

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Dr. Eileen De Villa  
Medical Officer of Health

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On April 13, 2017, the Government of Canada tabled legislation to legalize and regulate non-medical cannabis.

Image source: [Health Canada](#)



- Cannabis is not a benign substance.
- Main public health concerns include:
  - Early, frequent use by young people
  - Cannabis-impaired driving
- The regulatory framework should apply lessons from tobacco and alcohol to reduce harms from use.

- Non-medical cannabis use is highest among young adults (18 to 24 years) in Canada.
- The production and quality of non-medical cannabis in the current illegal market is uncontrolled and poses risks to users.
- It is recommended that the Province set the minimum age of purchase at 19 years of age to align with that for alcohol, allow consistent messaging and access to a regulated market.



Strong, health protective regulatory control is recommended including:

- Provincially-controlled agency
- Restrictions on retail location, density and hours of sale
- No co-location with alcohol sales
- Comprehensive social responsibility programs
- Public health messaging on the risk and harms of use





- Like tobacco smoke, cancer-causing chemicals are found in cannabis smoke.
- However, health effects from cannabis second-hand smoke are not well known.
- It is recommended that the Province prohibit smoking and vaping cannabis in public places to align with laws for tobacco smoking.

- It is recommended that the Province conduct formal consultations with municipalities and public health to develop a health protective legislation for non-medical cannabis in Ontario.
- TPH will continue to:
  - Engage with other City divisions and the public health community
  - Conduct public education to promote moderation in use and awareness of potential health harms