



MDDCSAM is the Maryland state chapter of the American Society of Addiction Medicine whose members are physicians and other health providers who treat people with substance use disorders.

SB 399 - Cannabis - Advertising - Prohibited Locations

Senate Finance Committee, March 7, 2024

OPPOSED

We are writing on behalf of the Maryland-DC Society of Addiction Medicine (MDDCSAM) to oppose Senate Bill 399, which repeals the current ban on all outdoor cannabis advertising and billboards and replaces it with a 500-foot exclusionary zone for cannabis advertising around substance use disorder treatment facilities and child- and youth-oriented locations such as schools, childcare centers, playgrounds, libraries, and public parks.

MDDCSAM opposes SB 399 because it increases risk for Maryland's children and youth, ignores scientific evidence of the public health harms from outdoor cannabis advertising, and is unnecessary to maintain the current economic success of Maryland's commercial cannabis industry.

Research shows that exposure to cannabis advertising, including billboards, among adolescents is associated with significantly increased cannabis use and development of cannabis use disorder.¹ The greater the exposure to cannabis billboards, the greater the frequency of cannabis use and development of cannabis use disorder.² Even adolescents who saw cannabis billboards only rarely or sometimes had a three-fold increase. The 500-foot exclusionary zone proposed in SB399 has no scientific support of which we are aware. In addition, the proposed exclusionary zone does not apply to other locations frequented by children and adolescents, such as museums, gyms, professional sports venues, and houses of worship. Thus, SB399 would essentially reverse the important public health safeguard established by the Maryland General Assembly when it banned all outdoor cannabis advertising. This goes against the scientific evidence cited above, which has contributed to several other states (AL, DE, FL, HI, MN, MT, NY, SD, and UT) completely banning billboards for cannabis advertising.³

The Maryland commercial cannabis industry has been very successful financially in the absence of outdoor cannabis advertising. Maryland's legal cannabis sales totaled approximately \$800 million in 2023 and are estimated to exceed \$1 billion in 2024.⁴ Billboard advertising is clearly not essential to the financial health of the Maryland cannabis industry.

In summary, MDDCSAM opposes SB399 because repeal of the current ban on outdoor cannabis advertising (billboards) removes an important public health safeguard for children and youth and is unnecessary for the financial health of the cannabis industry.

(continued . . .)

References

- ¹ D'Amico EJ et al. *Planting the Seed for Marijuana Use: Changes in Exposure to Medical Marijuana Advertising and Subsequent Adolescent Marijuana Use, Cognitions, and Consequences Over Seven Years*, *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, Vol. 188, pages 385-391 (2018).
- ² Trangenstein PJ et al. *Cannabis Marketing and Problematic Cannabis Use Among Adolescents*, *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, Vol. 82, pages 288-296 (2021).
- ³ ALA. ADMIN. CODE R. 538-X-4.17; DEL. CODE ANN. TIT. 16, § 4919A; FLA. STAT. ANN. § 381.986; HAW. CODE R. § 11-850-145; MINN. STAT. § 342.64; MONT. ADMIN. R. 42.39.123; N.Y. CANNABIS LAW § 86; S.D. ADMIN. R. 44:90:10:14.01; and UTAH ADMIN. CODE R. 4-41a-403.
- ⁴ *MCA Medical and Adult-Use Cannabis Data Dashboard*, Maryland Cannabis Administration, available at <https://mmcc.maryland.gov/Pages/Data-Dashboard.aspx>.