



**House Economic Matters Committee
March 4, 2026**

**House Bill 1519 - Cannabis - Management Service Agreements, Advertising, and Penalties -
Alterations (Cannabis Reform and Opportunity Act)**

Oppose

NCADD Maryland opposes House Bill 1519. This bill takes away language stating that an advertisement for a cannabis licensee, cannabis product, or cannabis-related service may not indirectly target individuals under the age of 21 and cannot be attractive to minors. This change in language opens cannabis advertisers up to the whole world of indirect marketing which is just as effective as direct marketing at encouraging people to use their products. This bill also allows a cannabis business to publicly display an advertisement as long as it is not within 500 feet of certain locations. All of these amendments loosen cannabis advertising restrictions and have the potential to promote advertising to people under 21.

Cannabis initiation by people under the age of 21 is common and tends to peak around age 16.¹ It has been well established in both tobacco and alcohol that exposure to advertising is associated with product initiation and continued use among youth and young adults. “The growing cannabis literature reveals a similar pattern: exposure to cannabis ads is associated with cannabis use among adolescents and young adults.”¹ Beyond exposure to advertisements, when the content is appealing to youth, it has a stronger association with use-related outcomes. Youth who find the content appealing are more likely to report positive attitudes toward the content and increased susceptibility to use the product in the future.¹

Youth cannabis use is of specific concern because cannabis use during adolescence and young adulthood may affect brain development. Cannabis use has been linked to a range of mental health problems, such as depression and social anxiety, difficulty thinking and problem-solving, problems with memory and learning, reduced coordination, difficulty maintaining attention, and problems with school and social life.² The association between cannabis and schizophrenia is stronger in people who start using cannabis at an earlier age and use cannabis more frequently.² The risk of developing cannabis use disorder is also stronger in people who start using cannabis during youth or adolescence and who use cannabis more frequently.

This bill has the potential to seriously harm Maryland youth. We urge an unfavorable report on House Bill 1519.

¹ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0955395925000179?dgcid=author>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/cannabis/health-effects/cannabis-and-teens.html>