The marijuana industry and its boosters have been actively advertising marijuana as a solution for the opioid epidemic: they claim that marijuana is an effective substitute for opioids in pain management and even that using marijuana is a treatment for opioid use disorder.

A deeper look at the scientific literature reveals that individual marijuana users are at much higher risk for developing opioid use disorders and that population studies claiming a correlation between state marijuana legalization and reduced opioid deaths have serious deficiencies. Better studies are now showing marijuana is a risk factor in the increased non-medical use of opioids.

“The opioid crisis appears to be worsening where marijuana has been legalized.” – JAMA Internal Medicine

“WE RECOMMEND AVOIDING MEDICAL MARIJUANA CERTIFICATION IN A PATIENT PRESCRIBED HIGH-DOSE OPIOIDS. GIVEN THE DEARTH OF EVIDENCE FOR LONG-TERM OPIOID THERAPY FOR CHRONIC PAIN, ADDING MORE UNCERTAINTY WITH MARIJUANA SEEMS UNWISE.”

- Mayo Clinic (2016)

“There is moderate evidence of a statistical association between cannabis use and the development of substance dependence and/or a substance abuse disorder for substances including alcohol, tobacco, and other illicit drugs.”

- National Academies of Science (2017)

There are 2x as many daily or near daily marijuana users today than there were just a decade ago.

“THE HISTORY OF OPIOIDS IN PAIN MEDICATION IN NORTH AMERICA SHOULD BE A LESSON. DESPITE LIMITED EVIDENCE FOR EFFECTIVENESS, PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS WERE SEEN AS A WONDER DRUG, ESPECIALLY FOR PAIN MANAGEMENT.”

“We should not repeat history with, yet another wonder drug installed before proper evidence for effectiveness and well-documented unintentional consequences”

- Commentary published in Addiction® criticizing a recently published study (2018)