

Press Release
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New Canadian Marijuana Policy Group, Smart Approaches to Marijuana Canada (SAMC), Officially Launches in Ottawa on March 4th, 2014

New group, co-founded by Canadian physicians, researchers, judges, businesspeople, and concerned citizens, establishes vocal, nonpartisan group that advocates against both legalizing marijuana or demonizing users; urges prevention and treatment approach

OTTAWA, ON - On March 4th representatives of the founding **Smart Approaches to Marijuana Canada (SAMC)** advisory council will be in Ottawa meeting with Members of Parliament, Senators, and invited parties at a breakfast session and launch of SAMC.

"We are proud to be launching Smart Approaches to Marijuana Canada," remarked Dr. Harold Kalant of the University of Toronto. "Right now, there is a false dichotomy when it comes to marijuana policy - as if our only two choices are legalization or incarceration. Neither, in fact, would be in the interest of Canada. Instead, we need to bridge the divide between the public's misunderstanding of marijuana as a benign drug and the scientific understanding of marijuana as a drug with potential for abuse and harm."

SAMC is a not-for-profit Canadian corporation and will be fund-raising in the public sector. SAMC is an associate of Project SAM (USA), launched in 2013 under the stewardship of former congressman Patrick Kennedy and former Obama Advisor Dr. Kevin Sabet.

SAMC believes that we do not need to saddle Canadians with criminal records for possessing low-levels of marijuana, but that legalization is not the answer either. Rather, an education, treatment, and prevention approach is needed as a basis for any policy discussion.

The SAMC Vision: A Health-First Approach.

- To inform the public on the science of today's marijuana;
- To have an honest conversation about reducing the unintended consequences of current marijuana policies, such as lifelong stigma due to criminal records;
- To oppose legalization, prevent the expansion of a Big Tobacco-like industry that will target children and vulnerable populations, and to prevent the normalization of cannabis.
- To promote scientific research on marijuana in order to obtain scientifically-approved, cannabis-related medications.

SAMC aims to be a credible source of scientific information and to champion policies that will decrease marijuana use.

Inaugural SAMC Council Members include: Nancy Morrison, Robert (Bob) Ransford, Chuck Doucette, Harold Kalant, MD PhD, Nancy Lee, Elizabeth Osuch, MD, Candace Plattor, MA, RCC, Charles Ratzlaff, Pt, PhD, Philip Seeman, MD, PhD, Jim Stimson, Pamela McColl.

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