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Position Statement on Strengthening the Legal Framework
on the Responsible Use of Cannabis
(White paper March 2021)

The Malta College of Family Doctors (MCFD) is a Voluntary Organisation (VO/0973) that strives to improve the academic and clinical performance of specialists in family medicine (known as “it-tobba tal-familja” or “general practitioners” or “family doctors”) and the standards of primary health care in our country. www.mcfd.org.mt

The MCFD understands the need for decriminalization of the possession of small quantities of cannabis for personal use. However it is felt that legalizing its use must be better balanced with the effects of cannabis on users, the protection of younger generations, the expected increase in its overall consumption, and the potential increase in use of other illicit drugs.

Use of cannabis in young brains has more harmful effects, and the risk of dependence and move towards harder illicit drugs is more likely. Therefore, the MCFD propose a minimum age for legalizing the use of cannabis. Additionally, cultivation of cannabis plants in homes will inevitably make cannabis products more accessible to minors and the younger generations must be shielded from this risk.

The MCFD notes that the White Paper does not elaborate, as it feels is needed, on the use of cannabis by specific categories, amongst them drivers, especially of mass transport, professionals, manual workers, pregnant women, adolescents, and patients with pre-existing mental health issues, including but not limited to schizophrenia.

The MCFD asks for an assessment of the impact on social support services, and on the health services, including but not exclusively the mental health services, with the aim of pre-empting mitigation and adaptation measures for the impacts expected.

The MCFD proposes continued support and further investment in effective educational, rehabilitation, support and community outreach services for users, as well as the introduction of new preventive and promotional health services within primary health care. This includes an increase in educational campaigns targeted at the vulnerable age group in the interest of better mental and physical health of our younger generations and the community overall.

And since it is hoped that public campaigns aiming at destigmatization by society of cannabis users leads to better reporting of undesirable effects from individual users, a strengthened structure and process for encouraging seeking help for such effects earlier would be welcome.

Stqarrija għall-Istampa 22 t'April 2021

Pozizzjoni fuq id-dokument għal konsultazzjoni "Lejn it-Tisħiħ tal-Qafas Legali għall-Użu responsabbli tal-Kannabis" (White Paper Marzu 2021)

Il-Kulleġġ tat-Tobba tal-Familja Maltin (MCFD) hija Organizzazzjoni Volontarja (VO/0973) li tistinka biex ittejjeb il-kwalita akkademika u fil-prattika tal-ispeċjalisti fil-medicina tal-familja, magħrufa bħala t-tobba tal-familja.

Il-Kulleġġ jagħraf il-bzonn ta' dekriminilazzjoni tal-pussess ta' kwantitajiet zgħar ta' kannabis għall-uzu personali. Imma min-naha l-oħra iħoss li għandu jinstab bilanc aħjar bejn il-legalizzar tal-uzu tal-kannabis u l-effetti tal-kannabis fuq min juzaha, il-harsien tal-generazzjonijiet li telghin, iz-zieda mistennija fil-konsum tagħha u iz-zieda potenzjali fl-uzu ta' drogi oħra mhux permessi.

Il-kannabis tagħmel ħsara akbar fl-imħuħ ta' zgħar u zghazagħ, u r-riskju li jimxu għal drogi aktar iebsa u mhux permessi huwa reali. Għaldaqstant l-MCFD tipproponi li jkun hemm eta' minima għall-uzu legali tal-kannabis. Il-kultivazzjoni tal-kannabis fid-djar inevitabilment ħa tagħmilha aktar accessibbli għal minuri u il-generazzjonijiet zgħar għandhom jitharsu minn dan ir-riskju.

Il-MCFD tinnota li l-White Paper ma telaborax, meta hija mixtieqa li tagħmel dan, fl-uzu tal-kannabis minn kategoriji specifici, bħal sewwieqa (b'mod specjali ta' mezzi ta' trasport tal-massa), professjonisti, haddiema tal-id, nisa tqal, adoloxxenti, u pazjenti li jbatu minn mard mentali, fosthom skizofrenija.

L-MCFD titlob li isir analizi tal-impatt fuq is-servizzi fil-komunita u tas-servizz tas-saħħa, fosthom tas-saħħa mentali, bil-għan li jidhlu mizuri korrettivi qabel u mhux tard.

Il-Kulleġg jipproponi iktar investiment u appogg sostnut f'servizzi edukattivi, ta' rijabilitazzjoni, ta' support u servizzi fil-komunita għal min juza' l-kannabis, kif ukoll l-introduzzjoni ta' servizzi ta' prevenzjoni u promozzjoni fi hdan il-kura primarja. Dan jinkludi zieda fil-kampanji edukattivi ndirizzati lejn gruppi vulnerabbli fl-interess ta' saħħa mentali u fizika ikbar tal-generazzjonijiet zagħzugħa u tal-komunita b'mod in generali.

U ladarba kampanji pubblici biex titneħħa l-istigma tas-socjeta lejn min juza' l-kannabis huma mixtieqa li jwasslu biex min juzaha u qed ibati minn effetti mhux mixtieqa jitkellem, għandha tissaħħaħ l-istruttura li tara li min ifittex l-għajjnuna isibha kmieni.