



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Conference of Boston Teaching Hospitals (COBTH) Opposes Marijuana Legalization Ballot Question

BOSTON - The Conference of Boston Teaching Hospitals (COBTH) today joined the Campaign for a Safe and Healthy Massachusetts, a coalition of community leaders, law enforcement agencies, legislators, members of the business community and health care organizations opposed to passage Question 4 on the November ballot seeking to legalize marijuana in the Commonwealth.

"The health and safety of Massachusetts residents and the communities we serve has always been a priority for our hospitals," said John Fernandez, President and CEO of Mass. Eye and Ear and Chair of COBTH. "Legalizing the recreational use of marijuana carries with it dangerous public health consequences."

Evidence of the negative effects of legalized marijuana is documented in states that have made the drug legal. In the year after Colorado legalized marijuana, the number of marijuana-related emergency visits increased nearly 30 percent as did the number of traffic deaths related to marijuana. Colorado now ranks first in the nation for teen marijuana use where after a 12% increase in use by those between age 12 and 17. In Washington, the number of fatal car crashes involving marijuana doubled in the one year since legalization.

"Massachusetts has made great strides in addressing the opioid epidemic, our focus should be on continuing that critical work and legalization of marijuana and the proven adverse public health impacts will only make that job harder," said John Erwin, COBTH's Executive Director.

Among the groups that have come out in opposition to Question 4 include:

- Massachusetts Hospital Association
- Massachusetts Medical Society
- Massachusetts Municipal Association
- Associated Industries of Massachusetts
- Retailers Association of Massachusetts

- Association of School Superintendents
- Construction Industries of Massachusetts
- Action for Boston Community Development
- Association for Behavioral Healthcare
- National Association of Mental Illness (Massachusetts Chapter)
- Massachusetts Chiefs of Police, Massachusetts Sheriffs Association and all Massachusetts District Attorneys

For more information, visit safeandhealthyma.com or on twitter at @safehealthyma.

About COBTH: The Conference of Boston Teaching Hospitals exists to maximize the Boston-area teaching hospitals' visibility on the issues that are fundamental to their unique missions of teaching and research. COBTH educates opinion leaders at all levels about the contributions of its members to the area's health and economy. Members include Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston Children's Hospital, Boston Medical Center, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Brigham and Women's Faulkner Hospital, Cambridge Health Alliance, Carney Hospital, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Lahey Hospital and Medical Center, Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, Massachusetts General Hospital, St. Elizabeth Medical Center, Tufts Medical Center, VA Boston Healthcare System.