

Trump Administration Launches Youth Cannabis Warning Campaign

Trump Administration to Warn About Marijuana's Impact on Youth in New Health Initiative

The Trump administration has unveiled a sweeping new health campaign aimed at curbing youth substance use, with marijuana identified as a central concern. Under the “Make Our Children Healthy Again” initiative, U.S. Surgeon General Denise Hinton will lead an educational push on the risks of cannabis, alcohol, vaping, and other controlled substances for children.

A Broad Public Health Agenda Led by RFK Jr.

The plan is part of the larger “Make America Healthy Again” (MAHA) strategy announced Tuesday by the White House and coordinated through the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), led by Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Encompassing more than 120 initiatives, the program is being framed as one of the most ambitious federal health reform agendas in decades.

Kennedy, once a vocal supporter of marijuana legalization, described the initiative as a fundamental shift in how the U.S. government addresses children’s health. “We are ending the corporate capture of public health, restoring transparency, and putting gold-standard science—not special interests—at the center of every decision,” he said.

The White House emphasized that the effort is aimed at reversing what it called a childhood chronic disease crisis, with substance use positioned as a key driver of poor outcomes.

Cannabis Use Among Youth in the Spotlight

One of the commission’s major directives is for the surgeon general to mount a national awareness campaign on the health effects of marijuana and other substances on youth. The campaign comes at a time when national surveys show mixed trends: while cannabis use among teens has declined in states like Colorado since legalization, federal officials remain concerned about broader cultural normalization and the availability of high-potency products.

Paul’s comments reflect widespread industry fears that a strict THC ban would criminalize nearly all hemp-derived products currently sold, from oils and tinctures to edibles and wellness supplements.

Enforcement Measures Beyond Cannabis

The MAHA plan extends beyond marijuana. It directs the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) to crack down on illicit vaping products, particularly those marketed toward children. Federal agencies will also ramp up education on synthetic substances such as the kratom alkaloid 7-OH, which the FDA recently moved to schedule as a controlled substance, distinguishing it from natural kratom.

The White House said in a statement: “To turn the tide and better protect our children, the United States must act decisively. This means pursuing truth, embracing science, and enacting pro-growth policies and innovations to restore children’s health.”

Shifting Positions on Marijuana Policy

The initiative arrives amid a broader national debate over marijuana policy. The Biden administration’s earlier move to reclassify cannabis from Schedule I to Schedule III of the Controlled Substances Act has been stalled for months. President Trump recently said a decision on the rescheduling effort will come “within weeks,” but opinions within his political circle remain divided.

For Kennedy, the issue has been particularly complicated. Once an outspoken advocate for legalization during his own presidential bid, he has softened his stance since joining the Trump administration. Earlier this year, he noted hearing “really catastrophic” personal stories about marijuana’s effects, signaling a more cautious approach under his leadership at HHS.

A New Phase in the Cannabis Debate

Public health experts see the administration’s messaging campaign as both a continuation of traditional youth drug prevention efforts and a signal that cannabis policy will remain politically fraught, even as public support for legalization grows.

Jay Bhattacharya, director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), said the MAHA initiative represents “a blueprint for the entire government to focus on solving the chronic disease crisis facing American children.” He emphasized the importance of ensuring that “our children live longer and healthier lives than we will.”

With the surgeon general preparing to launch the campaign, the administration is poised to amplify warnings about marijuana at a time when cannabis remains legal in nearly half the country but continues to divide federal policymakers.

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