

FROM KATHERINE B. MCGUIRE, APA CHIEF ADVOCACY OFFICER

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Representative Ted Yoho Tours Labs at the University of Florida

As part of APA's Stand for Science District Campaign aimed at connecting psychologists with their members of Congress, Rep. Ted Yoho (R-Fla.) toured several labs at the University of Florida's College of Public Health and Health Professions at the invitation of Michael Marsiske, PhD, past-president of APA's Div. 20 (Division on Adult Development and Aging). Rep. Yoho discussed the importance of federal investment in clinical and biomedical research with faculty from the clinical and health psychology and neurology departments with expertise on aging. The team demonstrated to Rep. Yoho how their work to better detect early changes in cognitive function and postpone cognitive decline has the potential to improve everyday functioning in older adults. Learn more about the Stand for Science District Campaign at <https://on.apa.org/StandforScienceCampaign>.

For more information, contact Shannon Wood at swood@apa.org.

Expanding Cannabis Production for Scientific Research

On Aug. 26, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) [committed to expanding the supply of cannabis](#) and cannabis products to be used for research. Citing a 40% increase in the number of individuals registered to conduct research with cannabis between 2017 and 2019, the DEA has more than doubled the production quota for cannabis each year based on increased usage projections for federally approved research projects. APA contributed to this effort in February when CEO Arthur C. Evans Jr., PhD, [wrote a letter to Attorney General William Barr](#) urging the DEA to take action on more than two dozen applications so that the scientific community could expand research on both the harmful and potential therapeutic effects of cannabis. In its press release, the DEA noted that it intends to propose new regulations that will govern the marijuana growers' program for scientific and medical research, to help ensure the DEA can evaluate the applications under the applicable legal standard and conform the program to relevant laws. The process will also provide applicants and the general public with an opportunity to comment on the regulations.

For more information, contact Geoff Mumford, PhD, at gmumford@apa.org.

APA Attends HHS Invite-Only Announcement on Marijuana Use

APA advocacy staff attended an invite-only announcement by Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar and Surgeon General Jerome Adams, MD, MPH, on a new advisory on [marijuana use and its damaging effects on the developing brain](#). Azar and Adams shared the stage with Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use Elinore McCance-Katz, MD, PhD, and National Institute on Drug Abuse director Nora Volkow, MD, as they highlighted specific aspects of the advisory including: newer strains of marijuana are increasingly more potent, leading to risks like anxiety, agitation, paranoia and psychosis; marijuana use, in both youth (12–17 years old) and young adults, appears to be associated with risks for opioid use, heavy alcohol use and major depressive episodes; and marijuana use rose by 69% (4.2% to 7.1%) between 2009 and 2016 among pregnant women. The advisory states that, based on science, marijuana use of any kind is unsafe for adolescents and pregnant mothers. Azar and Adams also highlighted the need for additional research on the risks and benefits of marijuana and their plans to work with the Drug Enforcement Administration to expand research.

For more information, contact Geoff Mumford, PhD, at gmumford@apa.org or Aaron Bishop at abishop@apa.org.

Eliminating Barriers to Timely Access to Medication-Assisted Treatment

APA has joined with other health organizations in the Coalition to Stop Opioid Overdose to [support](#) bipartisan legislation that would eliminate utilization review barriers interfering with timely access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for Medicaid beneficiaries. The Reducing Barriers to Substance Use Treatment Act (H.R. 3925), sponsored by Reps. Paul Tonko (D-N.Y.) and David McKinley (R-W.Va.), would prohibit state Medicaid programs from imposing prior authorizations or other types of utilization management techniques on all forms of MAT for opioid disorder, including counseling and behavior therapy, through 2025. The bill builds on a requirement from the SUPPORT Act—the opioid package enacted by the last Congress that requires state Medicaid programs to cover all three forms of MAT through 2025.

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