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New Study Links Cannabis Use to Serious Cardiovascular Risks — Public Health Experts Call for Clinicians and Cannabis Regulators to Act

OAKLAND, CA — A growing body of scientific evidence is raising serious concerns about the health impacts of cannabis use — particularly its links to heart attacks, stroke, and cardiovascular death — according to a powerful [new editorial](#) published this week in [Heart](#), a peer-reviewed medical journal of the British Medical Journal (BMS) and the British Cardiovascular Society (BCS).

The editorial by [Stanton A. Glantz](#), PhD, Professor of Medicine (retired), University of California San Francisco and [Lynn Silver](#), MD, MPH Director of [Getting it Right from the Start](#), a program of the Public Health Institute, [reviews a new meta-analysis](#) of 24 recent studies, showing significantly increased risk of cardiovascular events among cannabis users, including:

- **More than doubling of the risk of cardiovascular death**
- **29% higher risk of myocardial infarction (heart attack)**
- **20% higher risk of stroke**

“These findings are a wake-up call,” said **Dr. Glantz**. “Cannabis should be treated like tobacco: not criminalized but discouraged, with protection of bystanders from secondhand exposure. If we don’t act now, we risk compromising decades of progress on heart disease prevention.”

The study challenges the assumption that cannabis is a safe alternative to tobacco or alcohol, especially as daily and high-potency cannabis use has surged. In the U.S., daily cannabis use among adults 35–50 has tripled since 2008 and now nearly matches daily alcohol and cigarette use. In young adults, one in ten now uses cannabis daily — more than those who use cigarettes or alcohol.

Getting it Right from the Start has long called for stronger public health protections as cannabis legalization expands. The organization advocates for regulations that minimize health risks — including limits on product potency, clearer health warnings, and restrictions on marketing tactics that normalize or glamorize frequent use.

“Screening and education about cannabis-related harms must become part of how clinicians prevent heart disease and stroke - and preventing heart disease and stroke needs to be part of how we regulate

cannabis markets,” **said Dr. Silver.** “Today, regulation is focused almost exclusively on establishing the legal market, with woeful neglect of minimizing health risks.”

The editorial calls on clinicians to routinely screen for cannabis use — just as they do for tobacco and alcohol — and to educate patients on potential risks including heart disease. Research shows that health professionals are the most trusted source of cannabis information, yet most are not trained or encouraged to discuss its harms.

The study’s authors urge regulators to incorporate cardiovascular disease prevention into cannabis policy requiring warnings about cardiovascular risks, funding effective public education, and regulating product design and marketing in ways that reduce risk. For example, [high potency products](#) drive up addiction and frequent or daily use, which in turn increases heart disease and other risks.

[Getting it Right from the Start](#), a project of the Public Health Institute, works with states, cities, counties and community partners to develop evidence-based model policies and provide guidance on cannabis policies that can help reduce harms, protect against youth and problem cannabis use, and advance social equity.