

Public Health Professional – Bipartisan

ISMA wants to thank Congress for the leadership shown in helping close the hemp loophole late last year. As an association advocating on behalf of physicians, safety for your constituents is a top priority we all align with. Please help keep the loophole closed in the face of ongoing pressure from the hemp industry.

The authorization of hemp production in the 2018 Farm Bill was well-intentioned. Its purpose was to open a new agricultural avenue for American farmers and workers, offering economic opportunity in a growing and legitimate market.

Rather than respecting the intent of the legislation, it was exploited and the loophole to sell hemp products with delta-8 THC became a national gray market. Despite the belief that hemp-derived THC is a safe alternative to marijuana products, the FDA has never evaluated or approved delta-8 THC for safe use in any form.

Nonetheless, the industry marketed their products this way, placing children at direct risk. Intoxicating hemp products containing delta-8 THC were [directly targeted at teens](#), designed to appear as candy and snacks and sold without any age restrictions whatsoever. From a clinical standpoint, this is deeply concerning. And for younger children, this deceptive marketing led to accidental exposure that has [sent hundreds of children](#) to the hospital. Children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable to the neurological effects of THC, and early exposure is associated with lasting cognitive and developmental harm.

Research has also shown that intoxicating hemp products are often mislabeled and regularly surpass legal THC limits. Others have tested positive for things like pesticides and heavy metals, all of which pose long-term health risks to consumers of any age. That includes cognitive decline, neurodegenerative diseases, and even cancer.

Studies show just how bad an unregulated hemp market has been for our country. According to the [FDA](#), of more than 2,300 poison control center cases involving delta-8 THC exposure, 70 percent required evaluation at a health care facility. Critically, nearly half of those patients were children.

Congress took a necessary and evidence-based step late last year by closing this loophole. Yet, the industry is now pushing to reopen this same loophole that threatened public health.

ISMA members have voted and supported a number of positions on this topic. Below are the ones we would advocate for.

Because of the dangers of these products, ISMA members have adopted policy positions opposing the marketing of any form of THC to youth. ISMA members support the rescheduling of cannabis from DEA schedule I to II solely to facilitate much-needed controlled drug studies into the medical use of marijuana and its chemical components