FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Northern Illinois Rockford Region Public Information Officers
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This is a joint news release issued by the Northern Illinois Rockford Region Public Information Officers (NIR-PIO). NIR-PIO serves Boone, Carroll, DeKalb, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside, and Winnebago Counties.

WHAT REGIONAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS WANT YOU TO KNOW ABOUT MARIJUANA USE

Northern Illinois Rockford Region – With marijuana becoming legal in the State of Illinois on January 1, 2020, the nine local health departments that comprise the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Northern Illinois Rockford Region want to remind residents that there are health and mental health impacts associated with marijuana use. While marijuana is legal in Illinois, that does not mean it is safe and without health risks.

Pregnancy And Breastfeeding
Don’t use marijuana if pregnant or breastfeeding. Using marijuana can affect the health of your baby. Marijuana use during pregnancy is linked to low birth weight babies and may harm the growth and development of your baby’s brain. Because of the way marijuana is stored and released in the body, your baby could be exposed through breastmilk even after you stop using marijuana.

Youth And The Developing Brain
Marijuana use can cause problems with short term memory, learning, and even intelligence. Your brain continues to develop until age 25 and studies have shown that marijuana use in young people can impair development. The purchase and use of marijuana is illegal for those under 21.

Mental Health Impacts
Marijuana can be an addictive drug. One (1) in 10 users will become addicted. THC is the chemical in marijuana that makes you feel “high.” Higher THC concentrations have been linked to increased risk for addiction. Regular use of marijuana increases your risk for anxiety, depression, and schizophrenia.

Impacts On The Lung and Heart
Smoking marijuana can harm lung tissue and cause damage to small blood vessels. Smoke from marijuana contains many of the same toxins and carcinogens as tobacco smoke.

Know The Facts & Keep Others Safe
Before using marijuana, know the facts and keep others safe. Using marijuana or other THC products, can impair your judgement. Do not drive or perform other tasks that could be a risk if you have used marijuana. Just because it is legal, does not mean it is allowed by your employer. Using marijuana could cost you your job. Make sure that children and pets do not have access to marijuana. Protect kids from secondhand smoke. Think about those around you before you use and avoid exposing others without their knowledge and consent.

For more information on the health risks, go to https://www.prevention.org/lets-talk-cannabis

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