



**Mission:** *To improve public health in Maryland through education and advocacy*

**Vision:** *Healthy Marylanders living in Healthy Communities*

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**SB1009: Task Force on Responsible Use of Natural Psychedelic Substances**

**Hearing Date: 03/14/24**

**Committee: Finance**

**Position: SUPPORT**

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Finance Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 1009, sponsored by Senator Feldman. SB 1009 is a proposed bill that will establish the Task Force on Responsible Use of Natural Psychedelic Substances. This task force's purpose is to study and make recommendations about the use of natural psychedelic substances. The importance of this task force is underscored when looking at how prevalent the usage of natural psychedelics is. In a 2022 study looking at data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), it was found that psychedelic usage has increased from 0.9% in 2002 to 4% in 2019.<sup>1</sup> This statistic is striking as it demonstrates that psychedelics are being increasingly used amongst the U.S. population.

In addition, the majority of those who reported the use of psychedelics were individuals between the ages of 18 and 25. It was also observed that an individual's perception of perceived risk has declined across all age groups examined.<sup>1</sup> Instilling a task force is pertinent in promoting safe and informed use. Since the majority of those who reported usage are teenagers and young adults, this is especially crucial as long-term risks are associated with these substances.<sup>2</sup>

Regulations are also needed as psychedelic substances are becoming more commonplace and less stigmatized in the medical industry. "Psychedelic medicine" is finding a place in psychology as medical professionals employ psychedelics to treat conditions such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder.<sup>3</sup> Psychedelics also have been implemented in improving one's well-being and promoting spirituality (e.g., ayahuasca).<sup>4</sup> Ultimately, a task force is needed to make recommendations for safe clinical practice and promote safe handling of these substances in cultural and spiritual settings.

In conclusion, the Maryland Public Health Assembly strongly encourages the Maryland General Assembly to pass this bill. The implementation of this bill would be crucial in promoting safe, controlled, and informed access to natural psychedelic substances.

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*The Maryland Public Health Association (MdPHA) is a nonprofit, statewide organization of public health professionals dedicated to improving the lives of all Marylanders through education, advocacy, and collaboration. We support public policies consistent with our vision of healthy Marylanders living in healthy, equitable, communities. MdPHA is the state affiliate of the American Public Health Association, a nearly 145-year-old professional organization dedicated to improving population health and reducing the health disparities that plague our state and our nation.*

**Maryland Public Health Association (MdPHA)**

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**References:**

<sup>1</sup>New Study Estimates Over 5.5 Million U.S. Adults Use Hallucinogens. (2022, August 18). Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. <https://www.publichealth.columbia.edu/news/new-study-estimates-over-5-5-million-u-s-adults-use-hallucinogens>

<sup>2</sup>Buffo, J. (2020). Long-Term LSD Side Effects: Bad Trips, Overdosing, & Microdosing. American Addiction Centers. <https://americanaddictioncenters.org/lsd-abuse>

<sup>3</sup>Tupper, K. W., Wood, E., Yensen, R., & Johnson, M. W. (2015). Psychedelic medicine: a re-emerging therapeutic paradigm. Canadian Medical Association Journal, 187(14), 1054–1059. <https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.141124>

<sup>4</sup>National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2023, April). Psychedelic and Dissociative Drugs. National Institute on Drug Abuse. <https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/psychedelic-dissociative-drugs>