Over the past decade, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of states that have legalized marijuana, most of which has been for medical cannabis but a small number have legalized for recreational purposes. The traditional view held that marijuana was a gateway drug to more illicit substances of abuse (Kandel, 1986). However, questions arise whether the gateway theory remains valid, especially given the recent evidence that many adults are initiating for medical purposes. Adolescents are also initiating in states where it is legal because of cultural norms favoring its use as a social lubricant in the same way that alcohol is used to facilitate social interactions. These data have led many to adopt a perspective that marijuana is the new "Big Tobacco". Others believe that it is a pharmaceutical product in need of regulation in a similar way as opioids and other schedule II narcotics. This talk will explore the theoretical and empirical considerations in re-framing marijuana from a gateway drug to one that has a unique dual purpose in satisfying both medicinal and recreational usages. Data from several ongoing translational studies will be presented to illustrate how neurological, psychological, and cultural characteristics that are unique to marijuana require a new regulatory framework that considers its unique place in the developmental pathway of substance use from initiation and sequencing through illicit drugs.