Marijuana Legalization is Associated with Increased Use

The top 20 states with the highest rates of marijuana usage among youth aged 12-17 have legalized “medical” or recreational marijuana.25

Colorado now leads the country in past month marijuana usage among all age groups.25

Past month marijuana usage in Colorado for 12-17 year olds is 75% higher than the national average.25

In 2013-2014, Washington state ranked 6th in the nation for highest use among youth aged 12-17. Other states that have since legalized marijuana occupy 4th place (District of Columbia) and 5th place (Oregon).25

States with “medical marijuana” laws occupy 2nd and 3rd place (Vermont and Rhode Island, respectively).25

Since 2010-2011, past year marijuana usage among Coloradans has increased from 16.2% to 20.7% in 2013-2014.25
Marijuana is Harmful

» Between 1999 and 2010, the percentage of fatally injured drivers testing positive for marijuana almost tripled. 9

» Smoking marijuana results in approximately 5 times the carbon monoxide concentration, 3 times the tar, and the retention of one-third more tar in the respiratory tract than tobacco smoke.8,21,26,28

» Marijuana use is linked to depression, schizophrenia, suicidal thoughts, and paranoia.20

» Marijuana has been shown to significantly impact brain structure. People who smoke marijuana recreationally, meaning fewer times than once a week, develop differences in the shape of brain structures responsible for learning, reward, fear, addiction, decision-making, and emotional reactions.17

» Approximately 9% of people who use marijuana will become addicted.10 The risk of addiction for marijuana is 5-6 times higher for individuals that begin using before age 14.19

» In 2013, 49.3% of Idahoans entering publically funded treatment for marijuana, primarily, were between the ages of 12 and 17.13

Marijuana Legalization is Harmful

» Since 2013, the number of explosions in Colorado from marijuana concentrates has almost tripled.23

» In Colorado one year after retail marijuana sales, marijuana-related emergency department visits and hospitalizations increased 29% and 38%, respectively.23

Legal Marijuana Does NOT Eliminate the Black Market

» Marijuana legalization provides an opportunity for:12
  ◦ Fraudulent physician recommendations
  ◦ Underage sales
  ◦ Reselling legal marijuana to the black market
  ◦ Profit-making (dispensaries are non-profit)
  ◦ Having more marijuana than the allotted amount

» 40% of marijuana consumed in Colorado is sold illegally.11

“Illegal drug dealers are simply hiding in plain sight, attempting to use the legalized market as a cover.”12

» “In Colorado, more than 70% of doctor recommendations were written by fewer than 15 physicians.”12

According to a WIC study in Colorado, 35.8% reported using marijuana during their most recent pregnancy, 41.1% of mothers said they used marijuana after pregnancy, and 13.7% said they used marijuana while breastfeeding.14
Legalizing Marijuana Does NOT Reduce Crime

Crimes against persons† increased by 46% from 2011 to 2015.\textsuperscript{16,27}

Crime against society‡ increased by 175% from 2011 to 2015.\textsuperscript{16,27}

All Other Offenses§ increased by more than 5-fold from 2011 to 2015.\textsuperscript{16,27}

Before marijuana legalization, Ada County, Idaho, and Denver County, Colorado, had similar rates of drug/narcotic violations.\textsuperscript{16,18,27}

Between 2011 and 2015, Denver’s rate of drug/narcotic arrest almost tripled.\textsuperscript{16,27}

The El Paso Intelligence Center National Seizure System reported greater than 6-fold increase in highway interdictions resulting in seizures of Colorado marijuana from 2008 to 2014.\textsuperscript{23}

Since marijuana commercialization, the rate of marijuana trafficking arrests in Idaho have more than tripled.\textsuperscript{24}

*Data are adjusted for estimated population size\textsuperscript{27} in Denver during the corresponding years. The U.S. Census Bureau’s estimate for 2014 population size was also used for 2015, due to the unavailability of population estimates for 2015 at this time.
†Crimes against persons include murder, aggravated assault, forcible sex offenses, non-forcible sex offenses, kidnapping/abduction, simple assault, and intimidation.\textsuperscript{16}
‡Crimes against society include drug/narcotics violations, gambling, child pornography, prostitution, and weapon law violations.\textsuperscript{16}
§Other Offenses include fraud, curfew, disorderly conduct/disturbing the peace, non-violent family offenses, liquor law/drunkenness, other sex offenses, violation of a restraining order/court order, harassment, criminal trespassing, all other offenses.\textsuperscript{16}
Medical Organizations Do NOT Endorse Marijuana Legalization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The American Academy of Family Physicians</th>
<th>American Cancer Society</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“The AAFP also recognizes that some states have passed laws approving the medical use of marijuana; the AAFP does not endorse such laws.”¹</td>
<td>“The ACS does not advocate the use of inhaled marijuana or the legalization of marijuana.”²</td>
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<th>American Osteopathic Association</th>
<th>The American Epilepsy Society</th>
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<td>“The AOAAM is concerned by the current trend of state law legalizing the prescribing of “medical marijuana” as it is an illegal substance at a federal level and there is no standardized dosing or mechanism of administration.”⁶</td>
<td>“Such safety concerns coupled with a lack of evidence of efficacy in controlled studies result in a risk/benefit ratio that does not support use of marijuana for treatment of seizures at this time.”³</td>
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<th>American Glaucoma Foundation</th>
<th>The American Medical Association</th>
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<td>“Although marijuana can lower the intraocular pressure (IOP), its side effects and short duration of action, coupled with a lack of evidence that it use alters the course of glaucoma, preclude recommending this drug in any form for the treatment of glaucoma at the present time.”⁴</td>
<td>“This should not be viewed as an endorsement of state-based medical cannabis programs, the legalization of marijuana, or that scientific evidence on the therapeutic use of cannabis meets the current standards for a prescription drug product.”⁵</td>
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<th>American Society of Addiction Medicine</th>
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<td>“The AAP opposes legalization of marijuana because of the potential harms to children and adolescents.”¹⁵</td>
<td>“In summary, ASAM recommends against the approval of state initiatives to legalize marijuana.”⁷</td>
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Legalizing Marijuana Does NOT Reduce Prescription Drug Abuse

- Colorado ranked **2nd in the nation** for past year nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers, **up from 16th** in 2011. Colorado ranked **3rd, 7th,** and **1st** for the nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers among individuals 12-17, 18-25, and 26 and over, respectively.²⁵

- Nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers among adults 26 and over increased after commercialization and legalization in Colorado.²⁵

- Since marijuana legalization in Colorado, the percentage individuals 26 and older reporting the nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers **increased by 14%**. During the same time frame, past year nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers **decreased by 26% in Idaho**.²⁵
Sources


