



Prevention Resources, Inc.

Research

The Impacts of Marijuana on
Communities

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Executive Summary

In November of 2020, New Jersey voters will be asked to decide whether or not recreational (retail) marijuana should be legalized. The purpose of this white paper is to provide data and information on what the impacts of marijuana on communities are through lessons learned from states who have already legalized the drug.

THC and Potency

- In the 1990's, the average THC (the active ingredient which makes the user get high) level was 3.8% and the marijuana available now in retail dispensaries has the average THC level between 17.7% and 23.2%. (33)
- Marijuana concentrates such as dabs, waxes, vaping oils, and edibles can contain more than 90% THC. (34)

Youth/Normalizing Marijuana Use

- Every day 3,287 teens use marijuana for the first time.
- Using marijuana in adolescence is detrimental to the developing brain. It affects attention, memory, and learning skills. (37)
- In states where marijuana has been legalized for recreational use, youth marijuana use is substantially higher. (40)
- As more and more states legalize marijuana, the perception of harm decreases and teen marijuana use increases. (40)

Addiction

- 1 in 10 marijuana adult users will develop an addiction to the substance. (18-19)
- For those who begin using in adolescence, the rate of addiction rises to 1 in 6. (18-19)
- Cannabis (Marijuana) Use Disorder is users experiencing dependence on the drug.

Public Safety

- Car crashes related to marijuana use increased 6% in Washington, Oregon, and Colorado, compared to neighboring states that have not legalized marijuana. (55)
- In 2018, marijuana-impaired drivers were implicated in 18.2% of traffic fatalities in the state of Colorado, marking a 109% increase since legalization was implemented. (56)
- Since legalization, Colorado saw a 151% increase in fatal motor-vehicle deaths involving marijuana, and a 35% increase in motor-vehicle fatalities overall. (21)

Tax Revenue

- Marijuana tax revenue represents approximately nine tenths of 1% of Colorado's FY 2018 budget and is allocated for health care, health education, substance abuse prevention and treatment programs, and law enforcement. (43)
- In Colorado, for every dollar gained in tax revenue, approximately \$4.50 is spent to mitigate the effects of legalization. (35)

Workplace

- Employees who tested positive for marijuana had 55% more industrial accidents, 85% more injuries, and 75% greater absenteeism compared to those who tested negative.

- Positive marijuana tests increased almost 75% since legalization was passed in Colorado and Washington. (44)

Emergency Room

- Poison control calls and emergency room visits related to marijuana are on the rise.
- In Colorado, from 2013 to 2017, the yearly number of emergency department visits related to marijuana increased 54% after the legalization in 2012. Furthermore, the yearly number of marijuana-related hospitalizations increased 101%. (35)

Marijuana and Pregnancy

- Marijuana use among pregnant women rose by 69% between 2009 and 2016. (46)
- In states where recreational marijuana is legalized, many retail dispensaries recommend marijuana to pregnant women for morning sickness. (46)

Health Concerns

- Marijuana directly affects regions of the brain responsible for attention, memory and learning, coordination, emotions, and reaction time. (2-4)
- Marijuana can harm lung tissue and can cause scarring and damage to small blood vessels. (11-12)
- After the EVALI (E-cigarette or Vaping Product Use-Associated Lung Injury) outbreak, the CDC recommends people not to use any THC vaping products. (57)
- Marijuana can produce psychiatric effects that closely resemble symptoms of schizophrenia. (29)
- Marijuana negatively affects users' mental health and can cause depression, anxiety, suicidality. (30)

Environment

- In California, cannabis grows have resulted in 1.5 times more forest loss and 2.5 times greater fragmentation of the landscape, reducing wildlife habitats. (48)
- Marijuana requires almost 22 liters of water *per plant* a day during its growing season. (49)
- In California where drought issues persist, irrigation demands can actually exceed the amount of water flowing in a river leaving minimal water to sustain aquatic life. (49)
- Producing a few pounds of marijuana can have the same environmental toll as driving across America seven times. (66)

Energy Use

- States who have legalized recreational and/or medical marijuana have seen spikes in energy consumption by indoor growth facilities since fans and lights run 24 hours a day. (50)
- In Denver, 45% of the city's energy demand is to power indoor marijuana grow facilities. (50)

Market Structure/Black Market

- 64% of Colorado jurisdictions have banned both medical and recreational marijuana dispensaries. (54)
- 161 of California's 482 municipalities and 24 of the 58 counties have opted to allow commercial cannabis activity of any sort. (53)
- In New Jersey, 11% of its 565 municipalities (at least 60) have already banned marijuana businesses from opening within their borders if and when recreational marijuana is legalized. (52)
- Economically disadvantaged cities and towns are housing the marijuana dispensaries.
- In Colorado, black market marijuana operations jumped to 257 in 2018 from 144 in 2017. Those busts seized 6.1 tons of bulk marijuana. (49)

Introduction

In November 2020, when New Jersey voters hit the polls, there will be a question on the ballot that asks whether the state of New Jersey should legalize marijuana for recreational use for adults 21 and over.

The ballot question is as follows:

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO LEGALIZE MARIJUANA

“

Do you approve amending the Constitution to legalize a controlled form of marijuana called “cannabis”?

Only adults at least 21 years of age could use cannabis. The State commission created to oversee the State’s medical cannabis program would also oversee the new, personal use cannabis market.

Cannabis products would be subject to the State sales tax. If authorized by the Legislature, a municipality may pass a local ordinance to charge a local tax on cannabis products.

”

The ballot measure would not provide additional specifics, such as possession limits, home-grow rules, and retail regulation; rather the legislature and Cannabis Regulatory Commission (CRC) would need to enact additional laws and regulations.

Colorado and Washington became the first two states to legalize marijuana for recreational use in 2012 and since then nine other states have followed suit.

THC Potency

In 2019, the U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Jerome Adams, said, “This ain’t your mother’s marijuana, the marijuana of today is more potent.” ⁽³²⁾ There has been a threefold increase in the concentration of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) in the last 20 years. THC is the main active ingredient in cannabis and gives the user the high. In the last few decades, the level of THC has continued to increase. In the 1990’s, the average THC level was approximately 3.8% and in 2014, it was 12.2%. The marijuana available in dispensaries in some states has average concentrations of THC between 17.7% and 23.2%. ⁽³³⁾

Marijuana doesn’t only refer to the flowers, seeds, and stems of the cannabis plant. While dried cannabis flower is the traditional and most common form of marijuana, edibles, concentrates, extracts and other forms are becoming more prevalent. ⁽³⁴⁾

Marijuana concentrates such as dabs, waxes, and vaping oils as well as extracts can contain more than 90% THC. The process of dabbing vaporizes concentrated marijuana by placing it on a heated plate of metal and inhaling the vapors. This new trend among teens attracts both heavy users and new users due to the intensified high and effects it gives off. According to an open source survey, about 50% of 18-24 year olds use or know someone that dabs. The potency varies from product to product and oftentimes users may not realize the amount of THC they are consuming. ⁽²⁴⁾ Effects of high THC content include panic attacks, cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome (excessive vomiting and intense abdominal pain), and massive vasoconstriction which causes numbness or weakness on one side of the body, loss of balance, difficulty speaking and walking as well as difficulty seeing out of one or both eyes. ⁽⁶³⁻⁶⁴⁾



Figure 1 Marijuana Concentrate- Not just a plant.
<https://www.justthinktwice.gov/facts-about-marijuana-concentrates>



Figure 2 Marijuana edibles may appear in packaging that resemble children-oriented products.

Marijuana, ingested as a food product, known as an edible, poses a greater risk for THC poisoning. Levels of THC are hard to measure in edibles, and take longer to metabolize in the body. As a result, users unintentionally ingest significantly higher amounts of THC which leads to intensified effects and may cause the user to overdose. Children are especially at risk for THC poisoning since edibles are often sold as candies and baked goods. ⁽³¹⁾ Edibles also come in bright colored packaging and often mimic brands that are attractive to children, like Froot Loops.

Emergency Room

In the time since Colorado legalized recreational marijuana in 2012, there has been a substantial increase in emergency room visits and hospitalizations. Comparing 2013 to 2017, the yearly number of emergency department visits related to marijuana increased 54% after legalization. The yearly number of marijuana-related hospitalizations increased 101% after

the legalization of recreational marijuana. Marijuana only exposures more than quadrupled in the six-year average (2013-2018) since recreational marijuana was legalized compared to the six-year average (2007-2012) prior to legalization. (35)

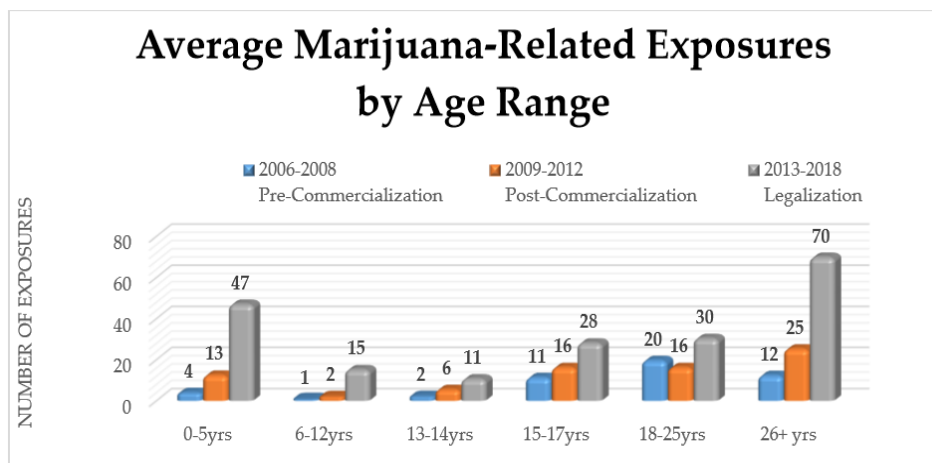


Figure 3 Source: <https://rmhidta.org/files/D2DF/FINAL-Volume6.pdf>

Marijuana related poison control calls and emergency room visits are on the rise. In Colorado, in 2017, there were 21,769 emergency department visits and 16,614 hospitalizations connected to marijuana. The Rocky Mountain Poison and Drug Center reported 266 marijuana-related exposures in 2018 overall with 147 of those affecting youth ages 0-18 years-old. (54)



Figure 4 Marijuana edibles mirror popular kids' candy

Youth

Marijuana continues to be the most used illicit drug by teens. According to the National Institutes for Health, everyday 3,287 teens use marijuana for the first time.

When people begin using marijuana at a young age, it can cause permanent IQ loss of as much as eight points. These IQ points do not come back, even after quitting marijuana. ⁽³⁵⁾ Eight IQ points may not sound like a lot on a scale where 100 is the average, but going from 100 points to 92 points shows a drop from the 50th percentile to the 29th percentile. Simply put, when looking at 100 people's IQ, a person at the 50th percentile is in the middle. A person in the 29th percentile would have 71 out of the 100 people smarter. There is a direct correlation between higher IQ points and higher education and income, as well as, better health and a longer life. ⁽³⁶⁾



Figure 5 IQ points go down for youth using marijuana

Using marijuana in adolescence is detrimental to the developing brain. The brain is not fully developed until the age of 25. Marijuana use affects attention, memory, and learning skills. Students who use marijuana are more likely not to finish high school or get a college degree, compared with their peers who don't use marijuana. ⁽³⁷⁾

Vaping nicotine among youth was declared an epidemic by the Attorney General in late 2018. A recent study showed adolescents who vaped were 3.5 times as likely to smoke marijuana. ⁽³⁸⁾ Teen rates for vaping marijuana have more than doubled in the past two years, according to the findings from the 2019 Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey. Past year vaping of marijuana was reported as 20.8% among 12th graders, 19.4% among 10th graders, and 7.0% for 8th graders. The MTF survey also found that past 30-day use for marijuana vaping also doubled for 12th graders in one year, from 7.5% to 14%. ⁽³⁹⁾

In states where marijuana has been legalized for recreational use, youth marijuana use is substantially higher even though it is illegal for those under the age of 21. Past month marijuana use among 12 to 17 year-olds increased 4% in Colorado from 2017 to 2018. In non-legal states, past year and past month use rates are significantly lower than in the state of Colorado. ⁽⁴⁰⁾

Marijuana, which can cause depression, anxiety and suicidality, particularly in young users, was found in the toxicology screens of 200 suicide victims in Colorado in 2017, up from 83 in 2012. ⁽⁴¹⁾

Normalizing Marijuana Use

As more and more states legalize marijuana, the perception of harm decreases and teen marijuana use increases. In Colorado, only 15.9% of young people aged 12 to 17 years-old perceive a great risk from using marijuana once a month, compared to a national rate of 23.6%.⁽⁴⁰⁾

In Colorado since legalization in 2012, past month marijuana use for ages 12 and older increased 58% and is 78% higher than the national average. Adult marijuana use increased 94% and is 96% higher than the national average. College age marijuana use increased 18% and is 48% higher than the national average.⁽³⁵⁾

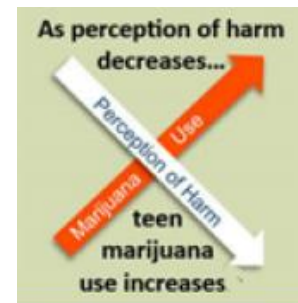


Figure 6 Source: National Institutes of Health

Addiction

Approximately 1 in 10 adult marijuana users will develop an addiction to the substance. For those who begin using in adolescence the rate of addiction rises to 1 in 6, as their brains are not fully developed, in turn, priming their brain for addiction.⁽¹⁸⁻¹⁹⁾ Cannabis (Marijuana) Use Disorder is users experiencing dependence on the drug, meaning they experience withdrawal symptoms when stopping their use.⁽²⁵⁾ Roughly 30% of users exhibit some degree of Cannabis Use Disorder. Users who begin using marijuana as teenagers are four to seven times more likely to develop Cannabis Use Disorder than their adult counterparts.⁽¹⁸⁻¹⁹⁾



1 in 10 marijuana users will develop an addiction to marijuana.



1 in 6 marijuana users will develop an addiction to marijuana if they begin using in adolescence.

Public Safety

Car crashes related to marijuana use increased 6% in Washington, Oregon, and Colorado, compared to neighboring states that have not legalized marijuana. Similarly, in another study, police reported accidents increased 5.2% in the states that legalized marijuana. ⁽⁵⁵⁾

Marijuana significantly impairs a user's ability to operate a motor vehicle. The impairment in cognitive functioning after marijuana use leads to lane weaving, slowed reaction time, and difficulty completing tasks which require undivided attention. ⁽²⁷⁾ Combining marijuana with alcohol worsens impairment while driving, especially lane weaving. In 2014, 43.6% of drivers in Colorado and Washington reported driving under the influence of marijuana in the past year. 23.9 % reported they drove within one hour of using marijuana at least five times in the past month. ⁽²⁸⁾

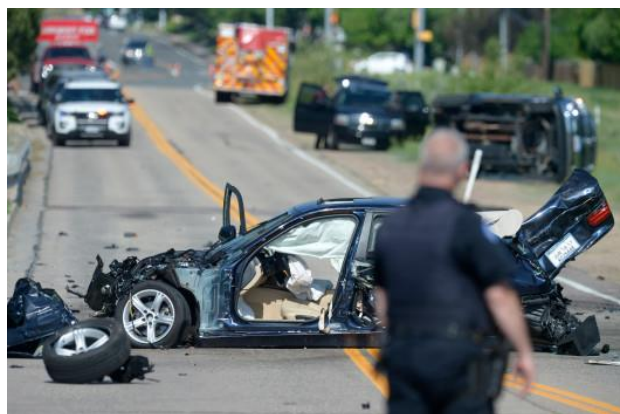


Figure 7 Source: Denver Post

The number of motor-vehicle related fatalities has risen since legalization in states that have legalized recreational marijuana. More specifically, since legalization, Colorado has seen a 151% increase in fatal motor-vehicle deaths involving marijuana, and a 35% increase in motor-vehicle fatalities overall. ⁽²¹⁾ In 2018, marijuana-impaired drivers were implicated in 18.2% of traffic fatalities in the state of Colorado, marking a 109% increase since legalization was implemented. ⁽⁵⁶⁾

Currently, there are no tests which can detect whether or not a driver is under the influence of marijuana at the time of a traffic stop. ⁽²⁷⁾ Police departments are burdened with additional expenses to train officers to identify drugged driving. A Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) is a law enforcement officer trained to identify drivers who are impaired by any drugs including marijuana. Police officers look for pupil dilation and pulse rate to determine whether the drivers are under the influence or what drug they may have taken. However, in New Jersey, critics claim DRE methodology is not reliable since law enforcement officers are not trained medical professionals and their determination in proving drug intoxication can be inaccurate. ⁽⁶²⁾

Another issue for law enforcement is the use of K-9 dogs. K-9 dogs, currently in the field, have been trained to identify marijuana along with other illicit drugs. When legalization is passed, dogs essentially become ineffective since one drug cannot be taken out of its training. All new dogs will need to be trained adding additional expenses to police departments. ⁽⁶¹⁾

Tax Revenue

According to a Gallop poll of more than 1000 people, conducted in May 2019, 56% of respondents deemed providing a tax revenue source for state and local government as “very important.” (42)

Marijuana tax revenue represents approximately nine tenths of 1% of Colorado’s Fiscal Year 2018 budget. (35)

According to the Colorado Department of Revenue, state lawmakers decided exactly how the marijuana tax cash fund would be spent. The tax cash fund receives the largest share of cannabis related revenue. The money is allocated for health care, health education, substance abuse prevention and treatment programs and law enforcement. It is important to note that one third of the revenue is undesignated giving state lawmakers some leeway in their spending. (43)

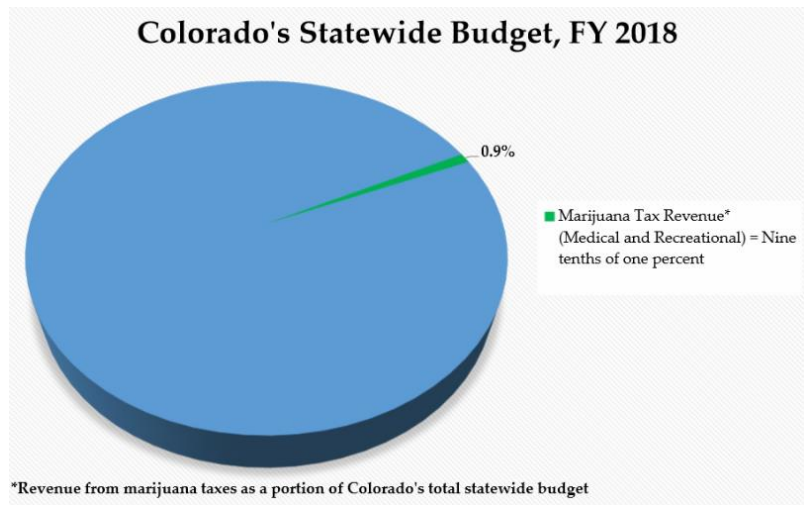


Figure 8 Source: <https://rmhidta.org/files/D2DF/FINAL-Volume6.pdf>

While states receive tax revenue through the sale of retail marijuana, the reality is that states are utilizing more money from the statewide budget to offset legalization. Specifically, in Colorado, for every dollar gained in tax revenue, approximately \$4.50 is spent to mitigate the effects of legalization. (35)

Workplace

For business owners and corporations, the legalization of marijuana is of great concern. Marijuana affects depth perception, reaction time, coordination and other motor skills, and it creates sensory distortion.

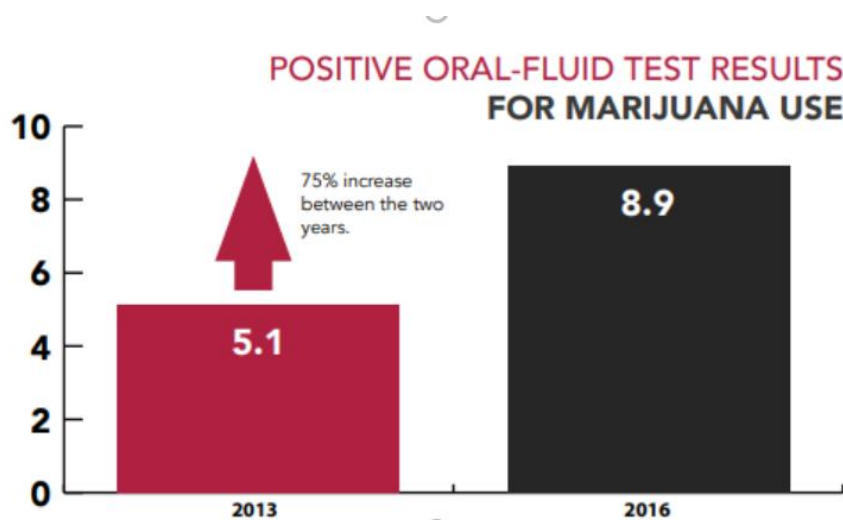


Figure 9 Source: <https://rmhidta.org/files/D2DF/FINAL-Volume6.pdf>

According to Quest Diagnostics in 2017, following the three-year period where legalization was passed in Colorado and Washington, positive marijuana tests increased almost 75%. (44) For American workers operating machinery, driving a forklift or delivering products in a vehicle, these effects can have grave consequences.

Institute on Drug Abuse, employees who tested positive for marijuana had 55% more industrial accidents, 85% more injuries, and 75% greater absenteeism compared to those who tested negative.

According to a study reported by the National

The bottom line is that marijuana use by employees negatively affects the workplace with decreased productivity, increased workmen's compensation and unemployment compensation claims, high turnover, and lawsuits.

Marijuana and Pregnancy

Marijuana is the most used illicit drug by pregnant women. Marijuana use among pregnant women rose by 69% between 2009 and 2016. In states where recreational marijuana is legalized, many dispensaries recommend marijuana to pregnant women for morning sickness.



Figure 10 Source: <https://kushca.com/more-pregnant-women-using-marijuana-study-finds/>

Marijuana use during pregnancy can affect the developing fetus because THC can enter the fetal brain from the mother's bloodstream. Studies have shown that marijuana use in pregnancy is associated with adverse outcomes. The Colorado Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System reported that maternal marijuana use was associated with a 50%

increased risk of low birth weight regardless of maternal age, race, ethnicity, education, and tobacco use.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends that women who are pregnant or contemplating pregnancy should discontinue marijuana use. Post birth, there are still dangers to the baby with maternal marijuana use. THC has been found in breast milk for up to six days after the last use. Marijuana can affect the baby's brain development, resulting in hyperactivity, poor cognitive function, and other long-term consequences. ⁽⁴⁶⁾

In states where marijuana is legalized, if a baby is born with marijuana in his/her system, it does not necessarily mean the baby will be taken away. However, a call will be made to Social Services and the agency will make a home visit to educate the mother about the effects of smoking marijuana during pregnancy and while breast feeding. ⁽⁶⁵⁾

Health Concerns

Marijuana can have a wide range of health effects on the body and brain. Marijuana directly affects regions of the brain responsible for attention, memory and learning, coordination, emotions, and reaction time. The damage can be long lasting or permanent. These impacts are felt in everyday living, including hindered academic performance and difficulty with simple memory recall. (2-4)

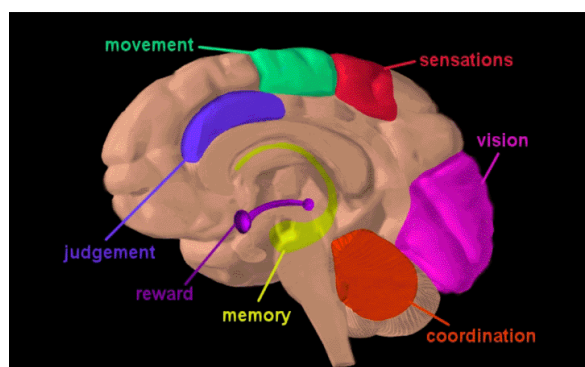


Figure 11 Source NIDA www.drugabuse.gov

Marijuana makes the heart beat faster. (5) It can lead to an increased risk of stroke or heart disease when users smoke marijuana. (6-10) Marijuana raises the user's heart rate. When inhaled, marijuana can harm lung tissue. It can cause scarring and damage to small blood

vessels. (11-12) Users have a greater risk of developing bronchitis, chronic coughs, and abnormal phlegm production. (13)

Marijuana negatively affects a user's mental health. The drug can produce psychiatric effects that closely resemble symptoms of schizophrenia in anyone who uses the drug. Marijuana can also trigger schizophrenia in those who are genetically predisposed to the condition. (29) Marijuana worsens symptoms in users who have mental illness, especially those struggling with anxiety or depression. (30)

EVALI

In the summer of 2019, there was an outbreak of a mysterious lung illness due to vaping. Through investigations by the CDC, FDA and state health authorities they made progress in identifying the cause of EVALI, E-cigarette or Vaping Product Use-Associated Lung Injury. As of February 18, 2020, there were 2,807 hospitalizations or deaths due to EVALI according to the CDC. 82% of the EVALI cases have been connected to marijuana concentrate (THC) oils in the wake of the vaping epidemic. The CDC and FDA recommend that people do not use any THC vaping products. (57)



Figure 12 Source: CDC.gov

Environment

Based on studies from other states where recreational marijuana has been legalized, there has been a significant impact on the environment and wildlife due to its production. The commercial-scale cultivation of marijuana in remote areas causes forest fragmentation, stream modification, soil erosion, and landslides. Based on a study done by the University of California Cooperative Extension, on a per-unit-area basis, the cannabis grows resulted in 1.5 times more forest loss and 2.5 times greater fragmentation of the landscape, breaking up large, contiguous forest into smaller patches and reducing wildlife habitat. (48)

Marijuana is a water hungry crop and requires almost 22 liters of water *per plant per day* during its growing season. In California, where drought issues persist, irrigation demands can actually exceed the amount of water flowing in a river leaving minimal water to sustain aquatic life. (49)

Another major issue in the cultivation of marijuana are “trespass grows.” Illegal cultivators operate on unpermitted farms on public lands which are often national forests or tribal lands. Specifically, in Humboldt County, California alone, in 2018 there were approximately 14,000 trespass grows on federal and private lands. Non-permitted cultivators want to avoid detection so they often choose these prime locations to hide their operations. These public and tribal lands are pristine wildlife habitats. These grows degrade watershed and kill wildlife by draining and polluting streams.

Trespass grows also use mass quantities of rodenticides and pesticides to control the rodents from chewing the irrigation lines and pests from eating the plants. Impact of using the rodenticide has resulted in the death of fish, birds and mammals. Pesticides have been ingested and subsequently poisoned animals and birds such as mule deer, grey foxes, coyotes, northern spotted owls and ravens. Once finished, the illegal growers leave trash and debris at these “trespass grows.”



Figure 13 Garbage and debris left by a “trespass grow.”
Source: <https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2017/08/21/cleaning-illegal-marijuana-grow-sites>

It is not only illegal cultivation that is causing environmental damage. Indoor cannabis cultivation is not green. In Denver, Colorado, there are over 600 licensed cultivation facilities that emit harmful pollutants that impact air quality. Marijuana plants during commercial cultivation produce volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that yield harmful pollutants which can impact the ozone. “In 2016, the marijuana industry was responsible for approximately 393,053 pounds of CO₂ emissions.” (35) In layman’s terms, that means that producing a few pounds of marijuana can have the same environmental toll as driving across America seven times. (66)

Energy Use

Cultivating marijuana indoors uses a lot of energy. Oftentimes fans and lights operate up to 24 hours a day. States who have legalized recreational and/or medical marijuana have seen spikes in energy use by indoor growth facilities. The summer after Oregon legalized recreational marijuana, Pacific Power in Portland experienced seven blackouts. The blackouts were tied back to cultivating marijuana indoors. In Denver, 45% of the city's energy demand is to power



indoor marijuana grow facilities. Energy consumption is not usually on the minds of those deciding whether or not to legalize marijuana, recreationally or medically, however it is an issue that needs to be discussed. (50)

Market Structure

Medical marijuana is legal in New Jersey. There are currently six medical marijuana dispensaries in the state. (51)

Once recreational marijuana is legalized in a state, it does not mean every municipality has to allow a dispensary. In New Jersey, 11% of its 565 municipalities (at least 60) have already banned marijuana businesses from opening within their borders if and when recreational marijuana is legalized. (52)

64% of Colorado jurisdictions have banned both medical and recreational marijuana. (54) Only 161 of California's 482 municipalities and 24 of the 58 counties have opted to allow commercial cannabis activity of any sort. (53) In Michigan, where citizens voted to legalize recreational marijuana in 2018, 1,393 out of 1,773 (80%) cities, towns, and townships opted out of the recreational marijuana retail market. (67)

Even though Californians, Coloradans, and Michiganders wanted the legalization of recreational marijuana, it is evident most do not want it in their own backyard. New Jersey seems to be following the same suit. Consequently, economically disadvantaged cities and towns are housing the marijuana dispensaries.

There are 1,016 dispensaries in the state of Colorado. Medical and recreational marijuana locations outnumber all Starbucks and McDonalds in the state, combined. 52% of the state's dispensaries are concentrated within three counties. (54)

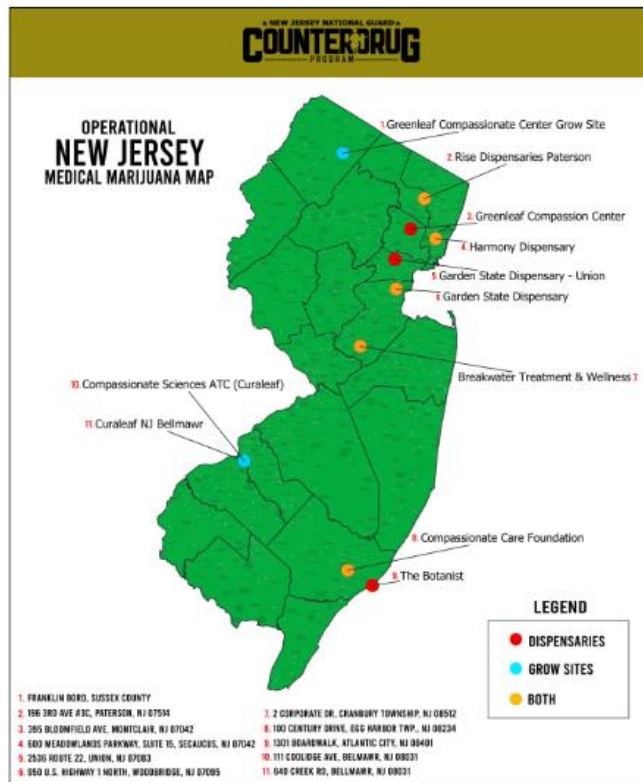


Figure 14 Source New Jersey National Guard

Social/Criminal Justice

There are a lot of proponents for decriminalization of marijuana including New Jersey State Senator Ronald Rice. Legalization of marijuana is removing all legal prohibitions against possession while decriminalization means it remains illegal, but that the legal system will not prosecute a person for possession under a specified amount. Subsequently, the individual won't receive a criminal record or a jail sentence. "Decriminalization and criminal record expungement legislation are common sense, compassionate approaches to social justice reform," Rice said. "As separate measures, decriminalization would provide instant relief to black and brown people currently in the court and correctional system, and expungement would remove the yoke of lifelong penalties lingering from past convictions." (58)



Figure 15 New Jersey State Senator Ronald Rice



Figure 16 Source: <https://hightimes.com/news/new-report-blacks-13-times-more-likely-to-get-arrested-for-weed-in-new-york/>

Unfortunately, in Colorado, while total marijuana arrests have decreased, people of color still comprise a disproportionate percentage of arrests for marijuana related charges. In addition, in 2017, 39% of marijuana-related arrests of African Americans were made without a warrant, compared to only 18% of such arrests of Caucasians. (54)

The Black Market

The black market for cannabis still exists. In states where it is currently legal, it's more expensive to purchase legal cannabis than to buy it on the black market. In addition, not all growers are willing to go through the due process to secure licensing and permits as it is an expensive and arduous process. (49)

In Colorado, illicit marijuana operations jumped to 257 in 2018 from 144 in 2017. Those busts seized 6.1 tons of bulk marijuana.

Home Grows

In Colorado, home grows became legal for residents once legalization was passed in 2012. Residents 21 and over are allowed to grow marijuana in their homes for personal use. According to the state of Colorado, residents must abide by the following rules:

- Marijuana plants must be kept in an enclosed, locked area that can't be viewed openly meaning plants can't be outside.
- Up to six plants are allowed per Colorado resident over age 21, with as many as three plants flowering at one time.
- At homes with residents under 21, any marijuana grow area must be enclosed and locked in a separate space that minors can't access.
- At homes without residents under 21, extra precautions must be taken to make sure any visiting youth don't have access to marijuana plants.
- Home grown marijuana or marijuana products can't be sold to anyone. Only licensed grow establishments can sell marijuana products. (59)

Residents who grow marijuana in their homes oftentimes have mold issues due to the excessive heat and water requirements to successfully grow the plants. Also many times, home growers are illegally modifying housing structures in engineering areas such as electrical, plumbing, and physical configurations. Potential risks for current and future owners can include fire and explosions or health issues.




Figure 17 Indoor Home Grow in Colorado

Source: <https://www.denverpost.com/2016/12/07/colorado-lawmakers-crackdown-home-marijuana-growers/>

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