

THE CANNABIS REPORT

THE LATEST NEWS AND UPDATES REGARDING
MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION

Washington After The Effect of State Marijuana Legalizations

Examining marijuana use among high school students in Washington state two years before and after the vote to legalize in 2012, revealed that rates of marijuana use increased by about 3 percent among 8th- and 10th-graders over that period.



remains too early” to say anything conclusive about the effect of recreational marijuana laws on teen marijuana use.

Studies suggests that legalization of marijuana in Washington reduced stigma and perceived risk of use. This could explain why younger adolescents are using more marijuana after legalization.

Studies also found no change in use among students at any grade level in Colorado. Colorado had a robust medical marijuana industry in place well before full legalization, which may have affected youth attitudes and behaviors there before the study period.



Pueblo County has 20 licensed retail marijuana stores. That's more than all the McDonald's, Starbucks and Walmart stores in the entire county. More homeless people are showing up than ever before. Young people in their twenties, many from other states came to Colorado to use marijuana or find jobs in the industry.

Three Pueblo hospitals are backing the vote against cannabis. One is concerned at a rise in newborns testing positive for the drug. Another said it has seen a 50% increase in teenagers at the emergency room because of marijuana-related conditions.



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'Commercialization won out': will legal marijuana be the next big tobacco?



Marijuana has rapidly become so normalized in some states that large billboards advertising cannabis are common while cigarette and alcohol adverts are banned or restricted, in cities such as Portland, Oregon, .

Anti-Marijuana groups view Colorado's pioneering of freely available marijuana as a warning to other states. They claim legalization of recreational cannabis is a disaster which has failed to deliver the much promised tax parachute and turned the state into a haven for smugglers. Above all, critics say, statistics show a sharp rise in drug use by teenagers, in fatal car accidents involving drivers under the influence of cannabis and of hospitals treating overdoses.



Anti-marijuana groups are painting them as little better than cigarette companies in their pursuit of profit over health, in the hope that will play better with liberal voters.

"The marijuana industry is taking pages out of the tobacco industry's playbook because the tobacco industry was so clever and made so much money,"

Joe Camel normalized cigarette smoking especially for young people. The Marlboro man normalized cigarettes for an entire generation. Marijuana wants to follow suit. Normalization is the cornerstone of that."



"Commercialization has won out and any notion of responsible regulation has been substituted for private profit,"



We're concerned about a big industry because they target children in Colorado and Washington very successfully with their candies and other products that they advertise. I

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The major concern with full legalization is that big, for-profit companies will get into the marijuana industry and market the drug in ways that encourage widespread use and abuse.



Big Alcohol has successfully lobbied to block tax increases and regulations on alcohol. In addition, it has marketed its products as fun and sexy during television programs as big as the Super Bowl, which is seen by millions of people, including children. Alcohol is linked to 88,000 deaths each year.



We should be less concerned if we are a country with a history of being able to promote moderation in our consumer use of products, or promote responsible corporate advertising or no advertising, or if we had a history of being able to take taxes gained from a vice and redirect them into some positive areas.



If marijuana companies are able to act like the tobacco and alcohol industries have in the past, there's a good chance that they'll convince more Americans to try or even regularly use marijuana, and some of the heaviest users may use more. And as these companies increase their profits, they'll be able to influence lawmakers in a way that could stifle regulations or other policies that curtail abuse.

Why is abuse such a big concern, particularly for a drug that has very few direct health harms? As Jon Caulkins, drug policy expert at Carnegie Mellon University, told me in 2015, "At some level, we know that spending more than half of your waking hours intoxicated for years and years on end is not increasing the likelihood that you'll win a Pulitzer Prize or discover the cure for cancer."



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marijuana isn't linked to deadly overdoses. But there are risks, including dependence and overuse, accidents, non-fatal overdoses that lead to mental anguish and anxiety, and marijuana use potentially causing psychotic episodes.



many experts prefer laws that prohibit or limit commercialization, such as creating a state monopoly that puts the state government in charge of sales (much like state-run liquor stores), allowing only nonprofits to sell marijuana, or legalizing marijuana but only allowing possession, gifting, and growing without allowing sales (like DC does).

Some advocates don't believe that commercialization is a bad thing. Many argue that marijuana should be treated like alcohol, particularly since it is seen as a safer drug. Given that alcohol and tobacco use among teens — and tobacco use among adults — has dropped over the past few years, advocates say that a regulated commercial model can prevent abuse while allowing reasonable access for responsible adults.

**21
& OVER**



The Center for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that tobacco causes 480,000 deaths each year, and excessive drinking causes 88,000 deaths annually, about a quarter of which are caused by direct health complications — so the commercial model still allows for a lot of deaths. At the same time, marijuana has never been linked to an overdose death, so it does carry significantly fewer direct health risks, even if it's abused more under a commercial model.

Representatives of the Drug Policy Alliance, say the concern for advocates has always been social justice. While commercialization may produce some challenges in the future, the problems with keeping weed illegal — the racial disparities in weed-related arrests and the black market that funds criminal groups around the world, for instance — are far, far worse.



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Cannabis Legalization and commercialization

While state law allows for the increase in normalizing, legalizing, and commercializing marijuana, any individuals or businesses engaged in prohibited activities related to marijuana are still committing criminal offenses punishable under Federal law.



Normalization and commercialization of marijuana poses a direct threat to young people as ingestible forms of the drug (edibles), often take the form of sweet snacks such as cookies or candies. When left unlabelled and unattended, these marijuana infused desserts easily confuse small children who may not readily recognize the difference. Moreover, edibles which are commonly made with a with THC rich resins, tend to have higher potency levels compared to smoked marijuana. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Consuming a large dose of THC can result in a higher THC concentration, greater intoxication, and an increased risk for adverse psychological effects."



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There is no way of measuring the potential harm that will be caused to young and immature people who embark on a long- term use of marijuana in the mistaken belief that because the substance has been legalized it cannot then be regarded as being very harmful.



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Lessons Learned from Legalization

Washington State has
more marijuana
businesses than
Starbucks or
McDonalds

Source: NW HIDTA Report, citing the
Washington State Liquor and Cannabis
Board and Starbucks; 24WallStreet.com



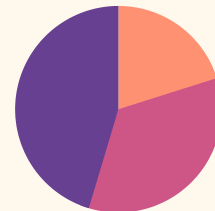
MARIJUANA BIZ

45%
326



MCDONALDS

20%
559



STARBUCKS

35%
735

Colorado has more
marijuana
businesses than
McDonalds and
Starbucks combined

Source: Rocky
Mountain HIDTA report
#4 (September 2016)



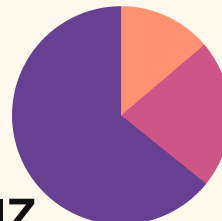
MARIJUANA BIZ

64%
940



MCDONALDS

14%
202



STARBUCKS

22%
322

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BLACK MARKET ACTIVITY SINCE LEGALIZATION

In February 2015, Colorado Attorney General Cynthia Coffman told reporters: "The criminals are still selling on the black market. ... We have plenty of cartel activity in Colorado (and) plenty of illegal activity that has not decreased at all."



Youth (ages 12 – 17) usage of marijuana in 2013-2014 increased 20% compared to 2011- 2012 before legalization of recreational use. Since legalization, youth usage in Colorado has grown approximately 74% higher than the national average. There has also been an 8 fold increase in reported marijuana exposures for children under the age of 12 years old. Those exposure rates have tripled for children 0 – 5 years old since 2010. College age adults (18 – 25 years old) in Colorado are also using marijuana at higher rates relative to the national average, 62% and 42% respectively.

While state law allows for the increase in normalizing, legalizing, and commercializing marijuana, any individuals or businesses engaged in prohibited activities related to marijuana are still committing criminal offenses punishable under Federal law.



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Cannabis Legalization in the State of Washington

Like Colorado, the number of young people under the age of 18 years old using the drug has grown. Ease of access for youth 17 years of age and younger has increased with every grade level. The ease of access to marijuana with each grade level correlates with the growth of usage rates.



Marijuana incidents at primary and secondary schools increased by approximately 75% between 2012 - 2013.



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Marijuana usage rates for 6th graders are relatively low (1%) and grow every year through 12th grade (27%).



While youth usage rates, specifically for marijuana, have increased by an average of approximately 3% every year since 2007, state funded substance use disorder (SUD) treatment rates for all other drugs have decreased.



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Options for Commercial Marijuana Industry

Commercial sale of marijuana that is similar to the alcohol model is not the only alternative to the prohibition of marijuana. Many different options fit the label legalization.



several intermediate supply options could be considered, particularly given the variety of different goals a jurisdiction might be hoping to accomplish by changing the policy. The supply option for a jurisdiction focused on revenue enhancement might be fundamentally different from that of a jurisdiction focused on eliminating the black market or individual harm reduction



The principal message is that marijuana policy should not be viewed as a binary choice between prohibition and the for-profit commercial model we see in Colorado and Washington State

policy makers that the tools of taxation and regulation should be considered in conjunction with the broad goals of the jurisdiction



Although Colorado and Washington has adopted the for-profit commercial (or so-called alcohol) model and Alaska and Oregon are in the process of doing the same, that strategy is just one of a dozen options available to jurisdictions seeking to change their marijuana supply laws.

Policymakers must make choices about what sorts of organizations—for profit, not for profit, or government agencies—would be permitted to produce and sell marijuana, about the prices at which marijuana is sold and how it is taxed, and about what sort of information to provide to consumers, along with a host of regulatory details, such as whether edibles can be sold.



Legalization encompasses a wide range of possible regimes, distinguished along multiple dimensions.



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Twelve Supply Alternatives to Status Quo Prohibition Marijuana Industry

