



WHAT'S AT STAKE: THE TRUTH, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

What Every Ohioan Should Know About Marijuana and the Potential Impact of Legalizing Recreational Marijuana Use and Retail Sales

The Big Picture

- **A Big Push for Big Profits from Big Corporations:** The push to legalize the recreational use and retail sales of marijuana in Ohio is fundamentally a move to commercialize marijuana for profit. Big Marijuana is today's version of Big Tobacco, and we should be very wary of the motives of this \$30 billion national industry.
- **We're Moving Faster Than Our Knowledge:** Things are moving way too fast to legalize recreational marijuana without fully understanding the risks and costs. We need to slow down. More than 20 states have legalized some form of marijuana use in less than a decade, and the only people who benefit from a rush to legalize are a small number of investors who control the large corporations that comprise the bulk of marijuana sales nationwide.
- **Some Unexpected Facts:**
 - **High Potency:** Today's marijuana is much more potent than in the past – with pot edibles, candies, cookies, ice creams, and waxes being up to 99% THC. Compare that to 5% "Woodstock Weed."
 - **Racial Disparities Remain:** In the first state to legalize recreational use—Colorado—more minority kids are being arrested for marijuana-related crimes.
 - **More People Get Hurt and Die:** Injuries and deaths from car crashes related to marijuana have gone up in states have legalized, as have young adult use and workplace positives.
- **Criminal Sentencing Reform Can Happen Without Legalization:** We do not need to legalize recreational marijuana in order to reform the criminal sentencing system. Ohio has already done two rounds of criminal sentencing reform in the past decade and more can continue. We can change criminal penalties, expunge records, and offer justice without commercializing today's highly potent marijuana products.
- **This is About the Industry of Addiction:** The marijuana industry is seeing [increased investment](#) from existing giants of addiction. Altria, the parent company of Phillip Morris, recently invested more than \$2 billion into the industry, and has secured a minority ownership into Juul – the vaping giant – in a move to cement future stakes in the addiction industry.

Health Harms and Addiction

- **Marijuana is Addictive:** According to the [National Institutes of Health](#)¹, [Mayo Clinic](#)², the [Cleveland Clinic](#)³, and [World Health Organization](#)⁴, marijuana is addictive and can produce withdrawal and dependence. Even the supporters of Ohio's recreational marijuana use acknowledge marijuana is addictive since they include funding for addiction treatment

support. Ohio has had one of the worst experience with opiate addiction in the nation. Giving more people greater access to marijuana that is more potent than ever before isn't good for Ohio.

- THC Impacts the Brain: [The NIH states that](#) regular marijuana use can reduce IQ by 8 points and may be irreversible; it also impairs memory and learning.⁵
- It's Still a Threshold Drug—With or Without Legalization: [Four out of every ten](#) lifetime marijuana users will go on to use another drug.⁶ According to the [American Journal of Psychiatry](#), “cannabis use, even among adults with moderate to severe pain, was associated with a substantially increased risk of nonmedical prescription opioid use.”⁷ Marijuana more than doubles the risk of developing opioid use disorder or initiating nonmedical prescription opioid use.⁸

The Lessons of Legalization in Other States

● Young People Use Marijuana More

- According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Colorado—the first state to legalize marijuana for recreational use—ranks first in the nation for first-time marijuana use by youth. (This is the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, the only population wide, national drug survey for all Americans 12 and older.)⁹
- Young adult use has been skyrocketing, especially in legal states.¹⁰
- Marijuana-related ER visits by Colorado teens on the rise since legalization.¹¹

● More People Are Killed or Injured Driving

- In Colorado and Washington State, marijuana-impaired driving fatalities have more than doubled.¹²
- One in five drivers in Washington State are under the influence of marijuana, up from one in 10 prior to legalization.¹³
- A recent study by the Colorado Division of criminal Justice found of the 4,000 drivers tested for marijuana in 2016, 73 percent were found to have the drug in their system.¹⁴
- AAA has reported that fatalities among people who have recently used marijuana have doubled since legalization in Washington State.¹⁵

● Crime Goes Up—Including Drug Crimes

- The crime rate in Colorado has increased 11 times faster than the rest of the nation since legalization. with the Colorado Bureau of Investigation reporting an 8.3% increase in property crimes and 18.6% increase in violent crimes.¹⁶
- Despite having legalized recreational use and sales legalization, African Americans are twice as likely to be arrested for marijuana-related offenses in both Colorado and Washington.¹⁷
- In 2016 alone, Colorado law enforcement confiscated 7,116 pounds of marijuana, carried out 252 felony arrests, and made 346 highway interdictions of marijuana headed to 36 different U.S. states (RMHIDTA, 2017).¹⁸
- A leaked police report in Oregon revealed that at least 70% of marijuana sales in 2016 were on the black market and around three to five times the amount of marijuana consumed in Oregon leaves the state for illegal sales (Hughes, 2017; Associated Press, 2017, August 14; OSPDES, 2017).¹⁹

More People Are Impaired at Work

- Marijuana positivity rates in the workplace are up in legalized states, which is a risk for employers, other workers and the public. As of 2018, positivity rates are up 48% in Nevada, 14% in Massachusetts, and 11% in California.²⁰
- In the general workforce, marijuana positivity increased 4% from 2017 while it increased nearly 8% in the safety-sensitive workforce.²¹

¹ See NIDA. (2018, June 25). Marijuana. Retrieved from www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana on 2018, July 2.

² See Irons, B. M.D., Mayo Clinic. (2015, Feb. 19). Speaking of Health. Retrieved from <https://mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/the-problem-with-kids-and-cannabis> on 2018, July 2 and Mayo Clinic Staff. (2017, Oct. 24). Marijuana. Retrieved from www.mayoclinic.org/drugs-supplements-marijuana/art-20364974 on 2018, July 2.

³ See Cleveland Clinic. (2014, July 29). Marijuana. Retrieved from <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/4392-marijuana> on 2018, July 2

⁴ See World Health Organization. (2016). The Health and Social Effects of Nonmedical Cannabis Use. Retrieved from <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/251056/9789241510240-eng.pdf;jsessionid=3EBC6F1B98621EB7690654FDFB631BEB?sequence=1> on 2018, July 2.

⁵ See NIDA. (2018, June 25). Marijuana. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana> on 2018, July 2.

⁶ See Secades-Villa, R., Garcia-Rodriguez, O., Jin, C.J., Wang S., & Blanco, C. (2014, Aug. 2). Probability and Predictors of the Cannabis Gateway Effect: A National Study. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25168081> on 2018, July 2.

⁷ See Olfson, M., Wall, M.M., Liu, S.M., Blanco, C. (2017, Sept. 26). Cannabis Use and Risk of Prescription Opioid Use Disorder in the United States. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28946762> on 2018, July 2.

⁸ See NIDA. (2017, Sept. 26). Marijuana Use is Associated with an increased Risk of Prescription Opioid Misuse and use Disorders. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/news-events/news-releases/2017/09/marijuana-use-associated-increased-risk-prescription-opioid-misuse-use-disorders> on 2018, July 2.

⁹ See Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2017). 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Rockville, MD.

¹⁰ See Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2017). 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Rockville, MD.

¹¹ See <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-marijuana-kids/marijuana-related-er-visits-by-colorado-teens-on-the-rise-idUSKBN1HO38A>

¹² See Highway Loss Data Institute. (2017, August 3). Studies link legalized use of recreational marijuana with increase in crashes. Status Report, 52(5). Retrieved from <http://www.iihs.org/iihs/sr/statusreport/article/52/5/3> on 2018, Feb. 3. And Washington Traffic Safety Commission. (2016). Driver toxicology testing and the involvement of marijuana in fatal crashes, 2010–2014. Olympia, WA: Author. Retrieved from http://wtsc.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2015/10/Driver-ToxicologyTesting-and-the-Involvement-of-Marijuana-in-Fatal-Crashes_REVFeb2016.pdf on 2018, Feb. 3.

¹³ See Smart Approaches to Marijuana. (2018 March). Lessons Learned from Marijuana Legalization in Four U.S. States and D.C. Retrieved from <https://learnaboutsam.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/SAM-Lessons-Learned-From-Marijuana-Legalization-Digital.pdf> on 2018, July 2.

¹⁴ See <https://www.denverpost.com/2018/08/09/driving-while-high-colorado/>

¹⁵ See Johnson, T. (2016, May 10). Fatal Road Crashes Involving Marijuana Double After State Legalizes Drug. Retrieved from <https://newsroom.aaa.com/2016/05/fatal-road-crashes-involving-marijuana-double-state-legalizes-drug/> on 2018, July 2

¹⁶ See Mitchell, K. (2017, July 11). Crime rate in Colorado increases much faster than rest of the country. Denver Post. Retrieved from <https://www.denverpost.com/2017/07/11/colorado-sees-big-increase-crime-10-percent-higher-murder-rate/> on 2018, Feb. 3 and Colorado Bureau of Investigation. (2017). National Uniform Crime Reports. Retrieved from <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cbi/crime-colorado1> on 2018, 2018 Feb. 3.

¹⁷ See Smart Approaches to Marijuana. (2018 March). Lessons Learned from Marijuana Legalization in Four U.S. States and D.C. Retrieved from <https://learnaboutsam.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/SAM-Lessons-Learned-From-Marijuana-Legalization-Digital.pdf> on 2018, July 2.

¹⁸ See Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area. (2017). The legalization of marijuana in Colorado: The impact. Retrieved from <http://www.rmhidta.org/html/FINAL%202017%20Legalization%20of%20Marijuana%20in%20Colorado%20The%20Impact.pdf>

¹⁹ See Hughes, T. (2017, July 31). Marijuana's legalization fuels black market in other states. USA Today. Retrieved from <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2017/07/31/marijuana-black-market/507417001/> on 2018, Feb. 3, Associated Press. (2017, August 14). Marijuana-legal states struggle with black-market weed.

²⁰ See Quest Diagnostics. (2015, June 9) Illicit Drug Positivity Rate Increases Sharply in Workplace Testing, Finds Quest Diagnostics Drug Testing Index™ Analysis. Retrieved from <http://newsroom.questdiagnostics.com/2015-06-09-Illicit-Drug-Positivity-Rate-Increases-Sharply-in-Workplace-Testing-Finds-Quest-Diagnostics-Drug-Testing-Index-Analysis> on 2018, July 2.

²¹ See Jupe, N. (2018 May 8) Quest Diagnostics Employer Solutions Blog. Retrieved from <https://blog.employersolutions.com/drug-testing-index-workforce-drug-positivity-at-highest-rate-in-a-decade/> on 2018, July 2.

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