Marijuana is Harmful

- Marijuana is now the most prevalent illegal drug detected in impaired drivers, fatally injured drivers, and motor crash victims\(^{19}\).

- 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\(^{4,16,24,27}\).

- Marijuana use is linked to depression, schizophrenia, suicidal thoughts, and paranoia\(^{15}\).

- 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\(^{12}\).

- Marijuana use has been linked to testicular cancer\(^{14}\), prostate cancer\(^{13}\), and cervical cancer\(^{13}\).

- Marijuana is addictive. Approximately 9\% of people who use marijuana will become addicted\(^{7}\). According to the Arapahoe House Treatment Network, teen admission to treatment for marijuana has increased 66\% between 2011 and 2014 in Colorado\(^{21}\).

Marijuana Usage Effects Do Not Stay in the Home

- Marijuana concentrates, extracted from the marijuana plant the same way crack is from cocaine, results in a very high THC concentration\(^{20}\). Using butane as a solvent in the process, numerous homes across the United States have exploded, completely collapsing homes, apartment buildings, and damaging other homes in the neighborhood\(^{20}\).

- Law enforcement and emergency personnel have no idea how the air quality is affected after these explosions. Since 2013, the amount of explosions from marijuana concentrates has more than doubled\(^{20}\).
The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Does Not Support Marijuana Legalization

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) states:

- “The American Academy of Pediatrics opposes the legalization of marijuana\(^1\)”.

- “The AAP strongly opposes the use of smoked marijuana because smoking is known to cause lung damage, and the effects of secondhand marijuana smoke are unknown\(^2\)”.

- “The AAP opposes legalization of marijuana because of the potential harms to children and adolescents. The AAP supports studying the effects of recent laws legalizing the use of marijuana to better understand the impact and define best policies to reduce adolescent marijuana use\(^2\)”.

- The AAP opposes “medical marijuana” outside the regulatory process of the US Food and Drug Administration. Notwithstanding this opposition to use, the AAP recognizes that marijuana may currently be an option for cannabinoid administration for children with life-limiting or severely debilitating conditions and for whom current therapies are inadequate\(^2\)”.

The American Epilepsy Society (AES) Supports CBD Research

- “The recent anecdotal reports of the positive effects of the marijuana derivative cannabidiol (CBD) for some individuals with treatment-resistant epilepsy give reason for hope. However, we must remember that these are only anecdotal reports and robust scientific evidence for the use of marijuana is lacking\(^3\)”.

- “The lack of information does not mean that marijuana is ineffective for epilepsy. It merely means that we do not know if marijuana is a safe and effective treatment for epilepsy which is why it should be studied using the well-founded research methods that all other effective treatments for epilepsy have undergone\(^3\)”.

“Any change in the legal status of marijuana, even if limited to adults, could affect the prevalence of use among adolescents\(^1\)”.

“The AES supports all well-controlled studies that will lead to a better understanding of the disease and development of safe and effective treatments for epilepsy\(^3\)”.
Marijuana Legalization Leads to Increased Use

- In Colorado, past year marijuana usage has **increased** from 16.2% to 18.9% from 2012 to 2013\(^\text{23}\).
  - The United States average in 2012 was 11.8% and 12.3% in 2013\(^\text{23}\).

- Past month (current) marijuana usage in Colorado for **12-17 year olds** is over **56% higher** than the national average in 2013\(^\text{23}\).

- 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\(^\text{9}\).

Our efforts should be focused on funding substance abuse prevention programs, not legalizing a third drug. Prevention is a lower cost measure that will not disrupt our culture.

Source: SAMHSA, 2013
Legal Marijuana Leads to More Government Interference

Unintended consequences of legalizing marijuana will lead to further government regulation. Early reports from legalization in Colorado show:

- The El Paso Intelligence Center National Seizure System reported a **397% increase** in highway interdictions resulting in seizures of Colorado marijuana from 2008 to 2013\textsuperscript{20}.

- There has been a **33.5% increase** in the number of pounds of marijuana seized from 2005-2008 to 2009-2013\textsuperscript{20}.

- From 2005 through September 2009, there were 0 cases of **accidental marijuana ingestion** at the emergency department in a children’s hospital in Colorado; from October 2009 to the end of 2011, there were **14**\textsuperscript{26}.

Crime Increases with Legalization

According to the Denver Police Department:

- Overall crime in Denver **increased 44%** from 2009-2014\textsuperscript{10}.

- Since marijuana legalization, **disorderly conduct** has increased 51%, **drug violations** have increased 12%, and **public drunkenness** is up 53%\textsuperscript{10}.

- 2013-2014 data\textsuperscript{10} show:
  - Crimes Against Persons: +**15%**
  - Crimes Against Property: -**3%**
  - Crimes Against Society: +**23%**
  - All Other Offenses: +**41%**

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{violent_crime_denver.png}
\caption{Violent Crime in Denver}
\end{figure}
Marijuana Is Not Less Harmful Than Alcohol

- Both alcohol and marijuana are intoxicants used recreationally. However, legality, patterns of use and long-term effects on the body make the two drugs difficult to compare.

- Short-term impacts of marijuana use is subtler than alcohol use, however, the same can be said for cigarettes. We know that the effects of cigarette smoking are devastating:
  - Cigarettes are responsible for 480,000 deaths annually compared to 88,000 deaths annually for alcohol.

- According to the CDC in 2006, Idaho’s economic cost of excessive drinking was $9.8 million, while tax revenue for alcohol was only $7,562 in the same year.

- Alcohol tax only accounts for 6% of alcohol-related public health costs.

Alcohol has been rigorously studied; we know its effects. We have barely begun to scratch the surface on research into marijuana harms.

In Idaho, we take pride in the fact that our kids are wholesome, our land is pristine, and our families are safe. Idaho is truly a spectacular place; let’s keep it that way.
Sources


