



MARIJUANA: What Is The Truth?

READ WHAT OBJECTIVE EXPERTS, SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND WELL DOCUMENTED STUDIES HAVE DISCOVERED

TRUTH: INCREASED USE

- The number of teenage and adult users would increase if marijuana was legalized.¹ The number would probably at least double and most likely triple.
- There are 16.7 million regular marijuana users (6.7% of Americans 12 years old or older.)² The increase would mean an additional 17 to 34 million users in the United States.
- Colorado could have anywhere from 20% to 30% of its teenage population regularly using marijuana.

ASK YOURSELF: *Do you think increased marijuana use among teenagers and adults is good for the future of our country?*

TRUTH: NEGATIVE IMPACT ON YOUTH

- Signs that a youth may be using marijuana are apathy, disrespect, disinterest in activities, lower grades, frequent mood changes, depression, and isolation from the family.³
- Teens who use marijuana are more likely than non-users to engage in delinquent and dangerous behavior.⁴
- Those same teens experience increased risk of schizophrenia and greater levels of depression including being three times more likely to have suicidal thoughts.⁵
- Marijuana-using teens are more likely to have multiple sexual partners and engage in unsafe sex.⁶
- Marijuana use has been shown to permanently impair brain development in youth.⁷ Learning skills such as problem solving, concentration, motivation and memory are negatively affected.
- In 2007, 68% of youth in treatment nationally were there for marijuana use.⁸ In 2009, 830,000 youth displayed characteristics of marijuana addiction
- Colorado currently has the nation's third highest rate of marijuana use among youth ages 12 – 17.5

ASK YOURSELF: *Would you want your son or daughter to become involved in using marijuana?*

TRUTH: IMPAIRED AND DANGEROUS DRIVING

- Stanford Medical School research shows that tested pilots were still somewhat impaired on a simulator twenty-four hours after having smoked marijuana.⁹
- Marijuana use adversely affects concentration, coordination, and perception, all important skills to safe driving.¹⁰
- In 2009, 28% of all fatally-injured drivers tested positive for marijuana use.¹¹
- In California, from 2005 to 2010, 1,240 persons were killed in traffic accidents where the driver had used marijuana.¹²

- Last year in Colorado, over fifty people were killed because of marijuana-impaired drivers.¹³
- More people driving on weekend nights were under the influence of marijuana (8.3%) than alcohol (2.2%).¹⁴
- A study of 182 truck accidents causing death found 12.8% of the drivers were under the influence of marijuana and 12.5% under the influence of alcohol.¹⁵
- A study revealed 28,000 high school seniors admitted to at least one accident after using marijuana.¹⁶

ASK YOURSELF: *Do you want more impaired drivers on our interstates and roadways?*

TRUTH: INCREASED-RISK FOR EMPLOYEES

- Safety, absenteeism, turnover rate, tardiness, productivity, work quality, and lawsuits are significant liabilities for employers with marijuana-using employees.
- Employees who tested positive for marijuana had 55% more industrial accidents and 85% more injuries compared to those that tested negative on a pre-employment exam.¹⁷
- Businesses with marijuana-impaired operators take a greater chance of causing injury to themselves, their shipments, and the traveling public. Accident records from one study showed that up to 12% of non-fatally injured drivers and up to 16% of fatally injured drivers had marijuana in their bloodstreams.¹⁸
- Drug using employees have 300% higher medical costs and benefits which increase insurance rates. Illicit drug users are 5 times more likely to file a claim under workers' compensation benefits.¹⁹
- Those testing positive for marijuana had absenteeism rates 75% higher than those that tested negative.²⁰

ASK YOURSELF: *If you were an employer, would you want to hire an employee who uses marijuana? As an employee, do you want to work with drug users who put you at risk and run up healthcare costs?*

TRUTH: SKYROCKETING POTENCY

- In 2009, the average THC level was 10%, is well over a 300% increase from the 70's when the THC potency was between 1.5-3%.²¹ Marijuana samples tested from the University of Mississippi have levels exceeding 30%.²²
- During the 70's users would speak about being "stoned," "wasted," "out of it," or "spaced out," clearly indicating that even 3% potency causes intoxication.
- Increased potency is leading to higher admissions to emergency room visits and drug treatment programs.²⁰

ASK YOURSELF: *Do you think this higher intoxicant level in marijuana is a positive factor for the health and safety of Americans?*

TRUTH: ADDITIONAL ADVERSE EFFECTS

- Despite assertions to the contrary, marijuana is addictive. More than 4 million Americans are classified as meeting the criteria for marijuana addiction.²³
- Of emergency room visits, 374,000 people were there because of a primary marijuana problem.²⁴
- Marijuana smoke contains 50% to 70% more cancer-causing agents than smoked tobacco.²⁵

- Only .7% of all state inmates are there for marijuana possession, with many pleading down from more serious crimes.²⁶ In Colorado, possession of one ounce of marijuana, which produces between 30 – 60 marijuana cigarettes, although illegal, is only a citable offense with a \$100 fine.
- Taxing marijuana to create revenue is “blind side” economics. Based on the experience with heavily taxed alcohol and cigarettes, revenue from marijuana would cover less than 15% of the cost associated with the adverse consequences of increased marijuana use.

ASK YOURSELF: Do you think legalizing marijuana would decrease its use?

IF YOU ANSWERED ‘NO’ TO ANY ONE OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS, THEN YOU SHOULD ALSO SAY ‘NO’ TO LEGALIZING MARIJUANA FOR RECREATIONAL USE.

*Adapted from: Healthy and Drug Free Colorado - Modified by: Drug Free America Foundation.

¹ DEA, “Speaking Out Against Drug Legalization” 2010

² SAMHSA, *2009 Annual Survey on Drug Use and Health*, September 2010

³ ONDCP’s National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign. Parents the Anti-Drug. Marijuana Facts

⁴ DEA, “DEA Position on Marijuana”, July 2010

⁵ DEA, “DEA Position on Marijuana”, July 2010

⁶ Bovassco, G., *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 2001

⁷ Dr. Christian Thurstone, M.D., Director, Denver Health – Substance Abuse, Treatment, Education and Prevention Program

⁸ SAMHSA, “Highlights for the 2007 Treatment Episode Data Set”

⁹ Government’s Supplemental Sentencing Memorandum Re: Health Effects of Marijuana, U.S. v. Greyslock, United States District Court for the District of Hawaii, 1988.

¹⁰ *Marijuana: Facts Parents Need to Know, Revised, NIDA, November 1998*

¹¹ Cesar Analysis of 2009 National Highway Transportation and Safety Administration FARS Data

¹² Cramer and Associates, “Study Shows Passage of California Cannabis Initiative Will Increase Traffic Deaths”

¹³ “Drugged Driving Getting Worse in Colorado”, 9News.com, 2011 February 17

¹⁴ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Report, 2009

¹⁵ National Transportation Safety Board, (USA), (1990). Safety study: fatigue, alcohol, other drugs, and medical factors in fatal-to-the-driver heavy truck crashes (volume1) PBSQ-917002NTSB/SS-90/91

¹⁶ O’Malley, Patrick and Johnston, Lloyd. “Unsafe Driving by High School Seniors: National Trends from 1976 to 2001 in Tickets and Accidents After Use of Alcohol, Marijuana and Other Illegal Drugs.” *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*. May 2003

¹⁷ Zwerling and Associates. *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Vol. 264; pp. 2639-2643. 1990.

¹⁸ Mathias, R. “Marijuana Impairs Driving-Related Skills and Workplace Performance.” *NIDA Notes*. Jan./Feb. 1996.

¹⁹ SmithKline Beecham Healthcare Services. “Substance Abuse in the Workplace II.” *Balanced Health Report*. 12-96. Vol. 4., No. 3

²⁰ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, “Marijuana – April 26”

²¹ ONDCP, “New Report Finds Higher Levels of THC in U.S. Marijuana to Date”, May 2009

²² CNN Health: Marijuana Potency Surpasses 10 Percent, US says by Jeanne Meserve and Mike M. Ahlers, May 14, 2009

²³ National Institute of Drug Abuse, “Marijuana”, 2010

²⁴ ONDCP, Director Kerlikowske Speech, March 4, 2010

²⁵ ONDCP, “Marijuana: Know the Facts”, October 2010

²⁶ Bureau of Justice Assistance Report, “Substance Abuse and Treatment, State and Federal Prisoners”, January 1999