



DRUG FREE SCHOOLS COALITION
144 Boomhower Rd., Lyon Mt., NY 12952
Phone 518-735-4729 fax 908-475-3599
drugfreesc@aol.com website:www.studentdrugtesting.org

THE CONSEQUENCES OF LEGALIZING MARIJUANA

1. INCREASED USE AMONG ADULTS AND YOUTH

The number of teenage and adult users will double or triple if marijuana is legalized. This will mean an additional 17 to 34 million adult and young users in the United States. [FN1]

Marijuana businesses will promote their products and package them in attractive ways to increase their market share (see attached pictures of marijuana “candy”).

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

2. NEGATIVE IMPACT ON YOUTH

Marijuana can cause disinterest in activities, lower grades and isolation from the family. It can permanently impair brain development. Problem solving, concentration, motivation and memory are negatively affected. Teens who use marijuana are more likely to engage in delinquent and dangerous behavior and experience increased risk of schizophrenia and depression including being three times more likely to have suicidal thoughts. [FN2]

Marijuana-using teens are more likely to have multiple sexual partners and engage in unsafe sex. [FN3]

Our drug treatment facilities are full of young people dealing with marijuana related problems. One study of children in treatment showed that, 48% were admitted for abuse or addiction to marijuana, while only 19.3 % for alcohol and 2.9 % for cocaine, 2.4 % for methamphetamine and 2.3 % for heroin. [FN4]

Marijuana use accounts for tens of thousands of marijuana related complaints at emergency rooms throughout the United States each year. Over 99,000 are young people. [FN5]

Despite arguments by the drug culture to the contrary, marijuana is addictive. [FN6] The levels of THC (marijuana's psychoactive ingredient) have never been higher. Higher potency marijuana is a major factor why marijuana is the number one drug causing young people to enter treatment and why there has been a substantial increase in the number of Americans in treatment for marijuana dependence. [FN7]

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

3. IMPAIRED AND DANGEROUS DRIVING

Marijuana significantly impairs the ability to safely operate a motor vehicle. Driving problems include: decreased handling performance, inability to maintain headway, impaired time and distance estimation, increased reaction times, sleepiness, impaired sustained vigilance and lack of motor coordination. [FN8]

Marijuana is the most prevalent drug found in fatally injured drivers testing positive for drugs. [FN9]

More than 12 % of high school seniors admitted to driving under the influence of marijuana in the two weeks prior being surveyed. [FN10]

13 % of high school seniors said they drove after using marijuana while only 10 % drove after having five or more drinks. Vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death among those aged 15 to 20. [FN11]

A study of high school students showed that about 28,000 seniors each year admitted that they were in at least one accident after using marijuana. [FN12]

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

4. INCREASED-RISK 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 and they had absenteeism rates 75% higher than those that tested negative. [FN13]

Marijuana use can cause impairment of short-term memory, attention, motor skills, reaction time, and the organization and integration of complex information. Marijuana use can cause decreased motivation and can cause mental health problems. Employees who use marijuana off-duty are still effected by it at work for the next few days. Impaired cognition can remain for a long period. Memory defects can last as long as six weeks. [FN14]

Employers may be liable for the actions of employees who use marijuana especially those employees in safety sensitive positions.

ASK YOURSELF: If you were an employer, would you want to hire an employee who uses marijuana?

5. MARIJUANA USE AND TRAUMA

A study of all patients admitted to a shock-trauma unit showed 34.7% had used marijuana very recently. [FN15]

In a study of seriously injured drivers admitted to a shock-trauma center, 26.9 % of the drivers tested positive for marijuana. [FN16]

ASK YOURSELF: Is using marijuana a safe thing to do?

If you answered 'no' to any one of the above questions, then you should also say 'no' to legalizing marijuana for recreational use.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: www.dfaf.org

References

[FN1] Based on experience in the US and Europe when marijuana laws have been relaxed, the number of users will double or triple. See, Speaking Out Against Drug Legalization, U.S. Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Washington, DC U.S.A. 2010, www.DEA.gov, pages 46 and 57; Currently, there are 16.7 million regular marijuana users in the US (12 years old or older.) SAMHSA, 2009 Annual Survey on Drug Use and Health, September 2010; The benchmark surveys of drug use show that that perception of harm with respect to marijuana has dropped off since the drive to legalize marijuana began. The benchmark surveys are the Monitoring the Future Survey, which has tracked drug use among American high school students annually since 1975 and the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, which has tracked drug use among Americans ages 12 and older since 1972. Monitoring the Future, National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Drug Abuse, available on the Internet at www.monitoringthefuture.org; Overview of Findings from the 2002 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (Office of Applied Studies, NHSDA Series H-21, DHHS Publication No. SMA 03- 3774). Rockville, MD; Conducted for SAMHSA (the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services) by North Carolina's Research Triangle Institute.

[FN2] DEA Position on Marijuana, U.S. Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Washington, DC U.S.A. July 2010, www.DEA.gov, pages 23-26 and 33-34; Speaking Out Against Drug Legalization, DEA, pages 51-53

[FN3] Bovassco, G., American Journal of Psychiatry, 2001

[FN4] "Non-medical Marijuana: Rite of Passage or Russian Roulette?" July 1999 obtained at website www.casacolumbia.org; Kaplan, H.B., Martin, S.S., Johnson, R.J., and Robbins, C.A., Escalation of marijuana use: Application of a general theory of deviant behavior. Journal of Health and Social Behavior. 1986;27:44-61; Clayton, R.R., and Leukefeld, C.G., The prevention of drug use among youth: implications of "legalization" Journal of Primary Prevention. 1992;12:289-302

[FN5] Drug Abuse Warning Network, 2004: National Estimates of Drug-Related Emergency Department Visits U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration <http://DAWNinfo.samhsa.gov/>

[FN6] The Occurrence of Cannabis Use Disorders and Other Cannabis Related Problems Among First Year College Students. Addictive Behaviors 33(3):397-411, March 2008; Compton, Dewey & Martin, Cannabis dependence and tolerance production. Advances in Alcohol and Substance Abuse 1990:9:129-147; Miller & Gold, The diagnosis of marijuana cannabis dependence. Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment 1989:6:183-192; Clayton & Leukefeld, The prevention of drug use among youth: implications of legalization. Journal of Prevention 1992:12:289-302; Kaplan, Martin, Johnson & Robbins, Escalation of marijuana use: Application of a general theory of deviant behavior. Journal of Health and Social Behavior 1986:27:44-61; "Regular or Heavy Use of Cannabis Was Associated with Increased Risk of Using Other Illicit Drugs" Addiction, 2006; 101:556-569; "As Marijuana Use Rises, More People Are Seeking Treatment for Addiction" -Wall Street Journal, 2 May 2006; "Twenty-Five Year Longitudinal Study Affirms Link Between Marijuana Use and Other Illicit Drug Use" - Congress of the United States, 14 March 2006; "New Study Reveals Marijuana is Addictive and Users Who Quit Experience Withdrawal"- All Headline News, 6 February 2007; "Escalation of Drug Use in Early Onset Cannabis Users Vs. Co-twin Controls" - Journal of the American Medical Association, 2003; 289:4

[FN7] New Report Finds Highest-Ever Levels of THC in US Marijuana. June 12, 2008, <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/news/press08/061208.html>

[FN8] National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Use of Controlled Substances and Highway Safety: A Report to Congress (U.S. Dept. of Transportation, Washington, D.C., 1988); "White House Drug Czar Launches Campaign to Stop Drugged Driving." Office of National Drug Control Policy Press Release, 19 November 2002

[FN9] "One-third of Fatally Injured Drivers with Known Test Results Tested Positive for at Least one Drug in 2009.CESARFAX. Vol. 19, Issue 49. December 20, 2010. www.cesar.umd.edu.

[FN10] Ibid.

[FN11] Drug-Impaired Driving by Youth Remains Serious Problem. NIDA News Release, October 29, 2007. <http://www.drugabuse.gov/newsroom/07/NR10-29.html>.

[FN12] 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; The DEA Position On Marijuana, DEA.gov

[FN13] Abbie Crites-Leoni, Medicinal Use of Marijuana: Is the Debate a Smoke Screen for Movement Toward Legalization? 19 J. Legal Med. 273, 280 (1998) (citing Schwartz, et al., Short-Term Memory Impairment in Cannabis-Dependent Adolescents, 143 Am. J. Dis. Child. 1214 (1989))

[FN14] ONDCP, "Marijuana: Know the Facts", October 2010

[FN15] Soderstrom, C., Trifillis, A., Shankar, B., Clark, W., and Cowley, R. Marijuana and Alcohol Use among 1023 Patients. Archives of Surgery, 123 (June 1988): 733-37; Skolnick, Illicit Drugs take still another toll: death or injury from vehicle-associated trauma. JAMA 1990;263:3122-3125; Soderstrom, Drug involvement among drivers admitted to a regional trauma center. Presented at the Transportation Research Board 70th Annual Meeting (Washington, D.C., Jan. 15, 1991).

[FN16] DuPont, Robert. "National Survey Confirms that Drugged Driving is Significantly More Widespread than Drunk Driving." Commentary, Institute for Behavior and Health, July 17, 2009. page 1. <http://www.ibhinc.org>.

Some of this information was borrowed with permission from: Healthy and Free Colorado, affiliated with the Colorado Drug Investigators Association, POB 372394, Denver, CO 80237