The marijuana industry and its boosters have been actively advertising marijuana as a solution for the opioid epidemic; they claim that marijuana is an effective substitute for opioids in pain management and have even gone on to say marijuana can be used as a treatment for opioid use disorder.

A deeper look at the scientific literature reveals that those who use marijuana are at much higher risk for developing opioid use disorders and that population studies claiming a correlation between state marijuana legalization and reduced opioid deaths have serious deficiencies. Better studies are now showing marijuana is a risk factor in the increased non-medical use of opioids.

“The opioid crisis appears to be worsening where marijuana has been legalized.”
- JAMA International Medicine Journal, 2018

“[There is moderate evidence of a statistical association between cannabis use and the development of substance dependence and/or a substance abuse disorder for substances including alcohol, tobacco, and other illicit drugs.”
- National Academies of Science (2017)

“We recommend avoiding medical marijuana certification in a patient prescribed high-dose opioids. Given the dearth of evidence for long-term opioid therapy for chronic pain, adding more uncertainty with marijuana seems unwise.”
- Mayo Clinic (2019)

**Opioid overdose fatalities have increased in Colorado since legalization.**

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References