

# PENNSYLVANIA – DON'T BE FOOLED By Pot Industry Promises

## MARIJUANA MYTHS AND FACTS

### MYTH: MARIJUANA IS GOOD FOR MENTAL HEALTH

#### FACT

Marijuana can cause psychosis, schizophrenia, anxiety, and depression. It is linked closely with suicide, and is a major risk factor for mental illness. (*DiForti et al., 2019; Hjorthøj et al., 2021; Henquet et al., 2005; Marconi et al., 2016; Mustonen et al., 2018; Niemi-Pynttari et al., 2013*)

### MYTH: MARIJUANA IS NOT ADDICTIVE.

#### FACT

Marijuana is addictive. Hundreds of thousands of Americans seek treatment for marijuana every year.

Peer-reviewed research has determined that between 21 and 30% of users have a marijuana use disorder. (*NIDA, 2019a*) If a user is below the age of 18, they are SEVEN TIMES more likely to develop a marijuana use disorder. (*NIDA, 2019a*)

More teens seek treatment for marijuana addiction than seek treatment for any other drug. (*SAMHSA, 2022*)

### MYTH: MARIJUANA IS MEDICINE.

#### FACT

No major medical association supports marijuana as medicine. Marijuana is made of hundreds of components and does not meet FDA standards for safe and effective medicine. (*AMA, 2015; NAS, 2020*)

### MYTH: IF WE LEGALIZE MARIJUANA, USE WILL BE LIMITED TO ADULTS.

#### FACT

States that have legal marijuana have seen an exploding illicit market and increasing rates of youth drug use. In states that have legalized "adult use" marijuana, 12–17-year-olds have experienced a 25% increase in marijuana use disorder compared to non-legal states.

(*Cerda et.al, 2020*)

### MYTH: TODAY'S MARIJUANA IS THE SAME AS IT WAS IN THE 1970'S.

#### FACT

Marijuana potency has increased significantly and rapidly. Marijuana in the 1970s had an average of 2% THC (the psychoactive component in marijuana), but today average potency ranges from 18-35% and products as high as 99% are produced and sold by the industry.

High potency products are more addictive and result in worse health outcomes for users, especially teens and young adults.

### MYTH: MARIJUANA IS A TREATMENT FOR PAIN AND COULD HELP SOLVE THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC.

#### FACT

Marijuana not only fails to mitigate pain but results in lower pain thresholds. (*American Society of Anesthesiologists, 2021*)

Marijuana legalization is associated with MORE OPIOID USE and FATALITIES. Lifetime use of marijuana is the #1 risk factor for opioid misuse. (*CDC, 2020*)

### MYTH: MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION DOES NOT IMPACT ROAD SAFETY.

#### FACT

Marijuana has been implicated in 25 PERCENT OF ROAD DEATHS in Colorado. (*CO Division of Criminal Justice, 2020*)

### MYTH: LEGALIZING MARIJUANA WILL ELIMINATE THE ILLICIT MARKET FOR MARIJUANA.

#### FACT

No state has eliminated or even reduced the illicit market.

Between 70-80% of marijuana sold in California legal pot shops was produced and grown illegally. (*NBC News, 2022*)

**MYTH: MARIJUANA USE IS NOT DANGEROUS TO PHYSICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH AND INCIDENTS OF NEGATIVE HEALTH OUTCOMES ARE RARE.**

**FACT**

At least 56 scientific studies have confirmed the link between high-potency marijuana and psychosis. (*van der Steur, Batalla, Bossong, 2020*)

Multiple scientific studies have now also linked THC to IQ Loss, psychosis, schizophrenia, depression and suicidality.

Marijuana users are 25% more likely to need emergency care and hospitalization. (*Vozoris et al., 2022*) Between 2011 and 2021, marijuana-related emergency department visits increased by 77% to over 800,000 ED visits. (*DAWN, 2011&2021*)

Among teenagers in Colorado, emergency department visits were 71% for psychiatric events. (*Dr. Ken Finn, 2019*)

**MYTH: MARIJUANA WILL GENERATE A WINDFALL OF TAX REVENUE.**

**FACT**

Marijuana accounts for less than 1% of state budgets in states that have legalized, and no state has made the money that advocates project.

A Colorado study found that for every \$1 in marijuana tax revenue, the state spends \$4.50 offsetting the costs of legalization (*CCU, 2017*).

Tax revenue as a percentage of state budgets for FY 21-22:

- Colorado – 0.09%
- Alaska – 0.29%
- Oregon – 0.3%
- California – 0.49%

**MYTH: MOST PEOPLE SUPPORT LEGALIZATION.**

**FACT**

Between 60 and 71% of localities in California, Colorado, New York, and New Jersey have voted to “opt-out”

of commercial marijuana sales. (*Nieves, 2021; Fuego, 2019; Rockefeller Institute of Government, 2022; MJBizDaily, 2021*)

**MYTH: MARIJUANA DOESN'T HARM THE ENVIRONMENT.**

**FACT**

Marijuana is an environmental blight that consumes massive amounts of energy, pollutes the air and water supply, results in land cover changes, and uses harmful pesticides. Marijuana production is nearly FOUR TIMES more energy intensive than coal or oil production. (*Reitz, 2015*)

It takes more water to grow marijuana than any other conventional crop, including wheat and rice. Indoor marijuana grows emit as much CO2 as 3.3 million cars. (*Larkin & Sweeney, 2022*)

**MYTH: MARIJUANA IS NOT AS HARMFUL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND CAN HELP MENTAL HEALTH.**

**FACT**

Research shows that marijuana use changes the structure of the brain and heavy, lifelong use can result in IQ loss. (*Hill & Hsu, 2022*) In Colorado, marijuana is the number one substance found in youth suicide toxicology reports. (*Roberts, 2019*)

**MYTH: MARIJUANA CAN HELP ALLEVIATE MORNING SICKNESS SYMPTOMS IN PREGNANT WOMEN.**

**FACT**

Smoking marijuana during pregnancy increases problems with neurological development in newborns, especially in motivation, learning, memory, and movement. (*Madras, 2016*) THC exposure in utero compromises brain function and IQ in young children.

Marijuana use among MEN may double the risk of partner miscarriage—regardless of the woman’s use. (*McAlpine, 2019*)

**SAM** Smart Approaches to Marijuana  
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