



Marijuana Key Considerations

Marijuana Today

Marijuana today is stronger than ever. THC (Delta 9 Tetrahydrocannabinol), the component responsible for the “high”, has increased by 121% from 1998 to 2010, and is continuing to rise. (*Leafly.com*)

Marijuana is available in many forms, concentrates a concentrate to use with vaping devices, edibles that look like candy and treats, and even beverages.

Youth Access and Use

Data has shown that as marijuana is legalized for medical and/or recreational use, it becomes more accessible to teens and is more socially acceptable. Teens who use marijuana regularly show increases in depression, anxiety, and social problems and decreases in IQ and school performance. There is also an increased risk of developing severe mental illness in the future. Teens’ brains are negatively impacted by substance use because their brains are still developing. (*NIDA*)

Medical vs. Recreational Marijuana

Many States have legalized “Medical Marijuana” for those who claim to benefit medically from the drug. “Recreational Marijuana” laws are simply for adults, at least 21 years of age, who want to experience a “high”. In states that have legalized medicinal and recreational marijuana, separate laws regulate each type of marijuana.

Current Federal Status

The cannabis plant, also known as marijuana, is considered a Schedule I illegal drug at the Federal level. This means that the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) has determined there is “no medical purpose for the marijuana plant, has high abuse potential, and severe safety concerns.” However, there are components of the marijuana plant that have been, or are in the process of being, approved by the FDA. Medications such as Marinol and Cesamet, are currently available in the U.S. through traditional pharmaceutical methods. Sativex and Epidiolex are in the process of being approved. (*FDA*)

Public Health and Safety

Marijuana does not have a long history of legalization, so research on how it impacts communities and States is limited. However, in states such as Colorado, there has been an increase in the number of marijuana-related traffic crashes, a problem that has been reflected in Michigan since “medical Marijuana” legalization. (*Michigan State Police*) Colorado has data showing an increase in poison control calls, emergency department and hospital visits related to marijuana, along with an increase in crime that correlates to legalization. (*Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area*)

Decriminalization

It is very rare for someone to be arrested and charged simply for using marijuana. When marijuana is a factor, there are usually other factors involved, as well, such as driving under the influence, theft, or other criminal acts. Decriminalization refers to removing the illegal status for **using** the substance. Decriminalization differs from legalization in that it does not establish the foundation for an industry.

Key Considerations about the Recreational Marijuana Proposal

Michigan voters are encouraged to give careful consideration to the terms of any proposal to legalize marijuana recreationally. The 2018 ballot proposal in Michigan will allow individuals to possess *2.5 oz. of marijuana on their person and *10 oz. at home, the highest limits in the nation. Local municipalities will have limited control over the quantity, type, and location of marijuana facilities, but will be allowed to control signage and hours of operation.

If communities wish to opt out, they will be required to petition for a local ballot initiative for the next regularly scheduled election. Marijuana establishments will not be allowed to be developed closer than 1000 feet from schools, but there are no other restrictions, such as parks, community centers, libraries, or churches. Michigan's excise tax will be among the lowest in the nation. Michigan's proposal will allow for public use in designated areas. Other states do not allow for any public use.

The full text of the ballot initiative can be found on www.ballotpedia.com.

*One ounce of marijuana can make anywhere from 30 to 80 joints.