Growing Fields of Data: Public Health and Cannabis Policy

NCSL Legislative Summit, Aug. 3, 2022
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This project is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling $563,000 with 100% funded by CDC/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by CDC/HHS, or the U.S. Government.
Interact with us!

Please capture QR code to participate in Poll Everywhere activities.

What topics comes to mind when you think about public health/safety and cannabis? What are your questions about? (safety? youth? products? testing? DUID? etc..)

consumer-education
youth-prevention&education
testing-accuracy concentrates
hemp-based-cbd-products
Legislators seek to learn and understand to inform their policy decisions.

A group of legislators and legislative staff tour a Colorado cannabis cultivation and processing facility. July 2019

Photo credit: Karmen Hanson, NCSL

- Welcome and overview
- New NCSL publication
- Introductions
- Panel discussion
- Word cloud
- Q&A
- Session feedback
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**How Four States Incorporated Public Health into Cannabis Policy**

A Case Study Report

This report explores the experiences of several states as they regulated nonmedicinal adult cannabis use through the lens of a public health perspective. The report includes four state case studies developed through research and process participant interviews, including those considered early adopters of nonmedicinal cannabis use as well as more recently adopting states. Challenges and lessons learned include issues surrounding the role and protection of public health, data collection and monitoring, industry and public engagement, and research and social equity.

**Current State of Cannabis Legalization**

Cannabis contains more than 100 compounds or cannabinoids, some of which produce a psychoactive effect or "high." Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), other compounds include cannabidiol (CBD), which is not intoxicating. Cannabis containing over 0.3% delta-8 THC and products derived from it remain categorized as Schedule I under the Federal Controlled Substances Act, with no currently accepted medical use in the United States, a lack of accepted safety for use under medical supervision, and a high potential for abuse.

States began regulating cannabis for medical use in 1996 and for nonmedical adult use in 2012, during the expansion of states regulating medical cannabis from 2000 to 2017, over a dozen states without medical cannabis allowed for low-THC or CBD-only products for people with specific health conditions.

As of July 2022, 37 states, three territories, and the District of Columbia have approved cannabis for medical use. Twenty states, two territories, and the District of Columbia allow for the nonmedical use of cannabis by adults over age 21. Twenty states enacted the ballot measure and five state legislatures took nonmedical measures into their own hands.

**Regulated Cannabis Programs**

- Adult & medical use regulated program
- Adult-only non-medical regulated program
- Commercial cannabis medical cannabis program
- CDB/low THC program
- No public cannabis access program

**Key Considerations**

From the beginning, the path to well-regulated and operating cannabis industry has potential challenges and lessons learned for public health, according to experts interviewed for this report. These challenges and lessons include collecting and monitoring data, engaging and educating interested parties, regulating consumer products and businesses, and ensuring applicable opportunities for people who would like to participate in the industry.
Our Panelists

Elyse Contreras
Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment

Brooke Hoots
Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

Gillian Schauer
Cannabis Regulators Association

Lewis Koski
Metrc

Legislator Respondents
CDPHE Marijuana Dashboard

https://marijuanahealthinfo.colorado.gov/

In menu under reports & summaries
CDC’s Cannabis Strategy Unit

Brooke Hoots, PhD, MSPH
Cannabis Strategy Unit Lead
CDC’s Cannabis Strategy Unit

- Created in 2020 to coordinate cannabis activities at CDC and provide a strategic plan for the agency on cannabis
- Sits in the Division of Overdose Prevention
- Focus on CDC’s strengths (e.g., surveillance, capacity building, applied research)
- Complementary to and collaborative with other federal agencies
Cannabis Strategic Plan

- Monitor trends
- Advance research
- Build state, tribal, local, and territorial capacity
- Support health systems and providers
- Increase public awareness
- Partner with public safety, schools, and community coalitions
Strategy Focus

• Health and social effects

• Focus populations
  – Infants, youth, and young adults
  – Pregnant and postpartum persons
  – Workers
  – Individuals with chronic conditions
  – Racial and ethnic minorities
Context

• Federal & state cannabis policy is quickly advancing

• Improved public health practices are needed related to:
  – Surveillance
  – Evaluation of prevention efforts
  – Development and dissemination of prevention resources

Cannabis strategic plan

Monitor trends

• Monitor cannabis use and associated health effects
• Conduct cognitive testing of cannabis questions
• Track state policies
Cannabis strategic plan

- Connect with federal and academic partners on research priorities, needs, and opportunities
- Development of CSU Research Agenda
- Peer-reviewed manuscripts
Cannabis strategic plan

• Facilitate technical assistance on cannabis state-based surveillance, policy, and practice
• Participate in and facilitate workgroups with federal, state, and partner organizations
• Emergency responses

Build state, tribal, local, and territorial capacity
Cannabis strategic plan

• Assess benefits and risks of medical cannabis use
• Health advisory on delta-8 THC products and adverse events
• Tools on youth substance use prevention

Support health systems and providers
Cannabis strategic plan

- Engage with community-based coalitions through the Drug Free Communities program

Partner with public safety, schools, and community coalitions
Cannabis strategic plan

- Educate the public on the known benefits and harms of cannabis use
- Updated CDC Marijuana website and fact sheets
thank you

For technical assistance:
cannabisTA@cdc.gov

For more information please contact Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
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Telephone: 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)/TTY: 1-888-232-6348
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Web: www.cdc.gov

The findings and conclusions in this presentation are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
CANNRA- Learn more www.cann-ra.org
Metrc- Learn more www.metrc.com

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Please submit or up/down vote questions for our panel or legislators.
Legislator Respondents

Share your interest in cannabis-related public health data.

Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward (D)- OR
Senate Deputy Majority Leader

Representative Hugh McKean (R)- CO
House Minority Leader
Q&A

Please submit or up/down vote questions for our panel or legislators.
Session Feedback

Please capture QR code or reopen Poll Everywhere to submit feedback.
NCSL Resources


Cannabis overview- civil and criminal justice topics: https://www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=28904

Thank you for joining our conversation.

Please capture QR code or reopen Poll Everywhere to submit feedback.

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Senior Fellow

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