

Implications of the Legalization of Recreational Marijuana in Colorado and Washington States in the U.S.

Legalization of recreational use of marijuana in Colorado passed in 2012. Implementation of the law began in 2014.

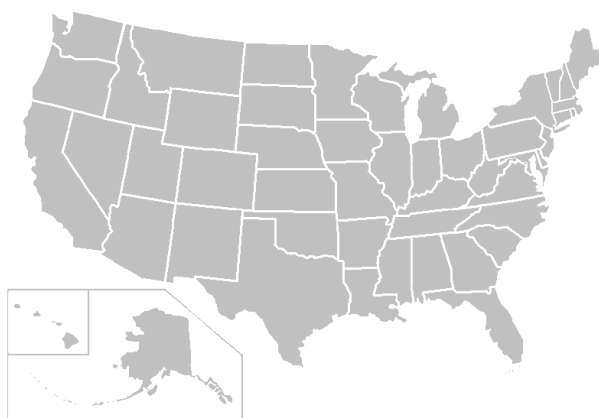
There have been a number of consequences broad reaching in scope. They include:

General Population

- Adult past month marijuana usage rates in Colorado are 104% higher than the national average, up from 51% higher than the national average in 2011/2012.
- Marijuana grown in Colorado has been found to be trafficked to 36 different states.
- Between 2010-2014, marijuana related traffic deaths have increased by 92%.
- Emergency room visits related to marijuana exposure increased by approximately 30% in 2014.
- Marijuana is second only to alcohol in the number of admissions to substance use disorder (SUD) treatment facilities.

Youth

- Marijuana usage rates among youth in Colorado is 74% higher than the rates for youth nationally.
- Marijuana use among youth ages 12-17 increased by 20% between 2013-2014.
- Marijuana exposure rates for children age 0-5 have tripled since 2010.



Sources:

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Similar to Colorado, legalization of recreational use of marijuana in Washington was passed in 2012 and implemented in 2014.

Many of the consequences in Washington State have been similar to those of Colorado. They include:

General Population

- Washington saw a 48% increase in marijuana related deadly car crashes between 2013-2014.
- The percentage of motorists who tested positive for marijuana increased from 65% in 2013 to 85% in 2014.
- Reported marijuana poisonings have risen by approximately 500% since 2006.

Youth

- Youth under the age of 18 years old accounted for nearly half of all reported marijuana exposures.
- Marijuana related incidents at primary and secondary schools have increased by 75% between 2012-2013.
- Since 2007, overall youth admissions into SUD treatment programs have decreased, except for marijuana which has increased by 3% every year.