Let’s Stop Asking, “Should we Legalize Marijuana?”

Landing on the Island

Andrew Freedman: Former Director of Marijuana Coordination, Partner at Freedman & Koski, Inc.
What’s on the Island?

A. Legal use of all marijuana by anybody 21 and older.
B. Easy access to marijuana for any perceived medicinal benefit.
C. A safe, familiar purchasing process.
D. Maximizing tax revenue.
E. Cannabis users treated similarly to alcohol users.
Challenges to Landing on the Island

A. Facing skepticism from successful grassroots movement.
B. Battling historical credibility gap.
C. No enemy: Little negative connotations to marijuana industry.
D. Missing reliable data and research.
E. Lack of time.
Produced by: EEOHT, CDPHE 2016
*Black bars indicate margins of error (95% Confidence Intervals).
†Ever Use is defined as marijuana use at least one time during a student's lifetime and Current Use is defined as marijuana use at least once in the past 30 days.
‡Data Source: Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (HKCS) prevalence estimates for 2005-2015 and Youth Risk Behavioral Survey prevalence estimates for 2005-2015. Note: Data for the year 2007 was not included due to low sample size.
Youth Marijuana Use

Past 30-day marijuana use, 12-17 years old, 2005/06 to 2014/15

% reporting use in past 30 days

Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, National Survey on Drug Use and Health.
URL: http://www.samhsa.gov/data/population-data-nsduh
Risk of Harm and Ease of Access, Colorado High Schools


* Indicates statistically significant change
High School Student Past 30 Day Substance Use

Note: Marijuana was broken out separately from the first time in 2015-16. There were 2,657 marijuana suspensions (296 per 100,000 pupils) in 2015-16 that accounted for 63% of all drug suspensions.
Source: Colorado Department of Education.
Missing the Island for Youth Prevention

NEWS  MARIJUANA

Boulder rejects “Don’t Be a Lab Rat” cage after BVSD balks at teen pot campaign’s prop

Studies have shown that weed could shrink the teenage brain, lead to schizophrenia, cause long-term memory loss and reduce IQ.

Anyone up for more testing?

Hey Governor Chickenlooper, you’re “EDUCATING” the wrong Drug User

Local Business Owner, Kayvan Khalatbari Protests the Hypocrisy of Colorado’s “Don’t Be a Lab Rat” Campaign
Denver, Colorado • August 14th, 2014 • Photo By CannabisCamera.com
Successes in Youth Prevention

• Ongoing Public Education Campaigns
  – ProtectWhatsNext.com
  – Goodtoknowcolorado.com/youth-prevention/talking-to-you

• Significant Revenue for Research-Backed Programs
  – Behavioral Health Specialists in Schools
  – After School Program Funding
  – Survey Expansions
**Adult Marijuana Use in Colorado**

- **Prevalence (%)**

*Black bars indicate margins of error (95% Confidence Intervals).
†Ever Use was marijuana use at least once in a lifetime. Current Use is defined as marijuana use at least once in the past 30 days.
‡Data Source: Colorado Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System 2015.

Produced by: EEOHT, CDPHE 2016.
Case Study #2: Edibles

- **2000**: Prior to Legalized Medical Marijuana
  - NA
  - N=2539†

- **2001-2009**: Medical Marijuana Legalized
  - NA
  - N=34324

- **2010-2013**: Medical Marijuana Commercialized
  - N=32327
  - N=27311

- **2014-Sept 2015**: Retail Marijuana Legalized
  - N=28731
  - N=22340

- **2015-2016**: Emergency Department Visits
  - N=1440

- **2015-2016**: Hospitalizations
  - N=913

- **2015-2016**: Total
  - N=2696
Marijuana Exposure Calls to Poison Center, by Age Group of Case, 2000-2016

Produced by: Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment, Environmental Epidemiology, Occupational Health and Toxicology Branch (2016).

Data Source: National Poison Data System (NPDS) closed, human, marijuana exposure calls in Colorado from 2000 to 2016, n=1,578.
Current Adult Marijuana Use in Colorado by Age

Produced by: EEOHT, CDPHE 2016.

*Black bars indicate margins of error (95% Confidence Intervals).
†Current Use was marijuana use at least once in the past 30 days.
‡Data Source: Colorado Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System 2015.

Produced by: EEOHT, CDPHE 2016.
†There were 29 calls not shown due to unknown age.
‡Data Source: National Poison Data System (NPDS) closed, human, marijuana exposure calls in Colorado from July 2014 to December 2016, n=529.
Missing the Island for Edibles

CO Health Department Wants Marijuana Edibles Ban, But Forced to Drop It

BY NEWS DESK | OCTOBER 21, 2014

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) called Monday for a ban on marijuana edibles, including brownies, cookies, and most candies, but was quickly pulled back after public health officials said they did not realize that voter-approved Amendment 64 makes legal all forms of marijuana.

In a statement, the department said its recommendation for a ban was “just that” and that the public health agency does not represent Governor John Hickenlooper on the issue and did not run its desire to prohibit edibles past his office.

The move for a ban on edibles within his administration puts the Democratic governor in a dicey position. He did not campaign against Amendment 64 when it was on the ballot, but said he was against it.
Successes With Edibles

- Opaque and child-resistant packaging
- 10 mg dosing demarcations
- Public education campaigns
- Universal symbol on package and product
- No edibles in the shape of people, animals, or fruit.
Adult Marijuana Usage Rates

Past 30-day marijuana use, 26 years and older, 2005/06 to 2014/15

Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, National Survey on Drug Use and Health.
URL: http://www.samhsa.gov/data/population-data-nsduh
Better Data Requests

• Problematic use (functional impairment?) over 30 day and occasional use.
• Marijuana-related suspensions and expulsions
• Systems integration between public health data, public safety data, and seed-to-sale tracking data.
• Baseline and ongoing DUID data.
Fatalities on Colorado Roadways

Note: A positive test for cannabinoids may be the result of active THC or one of its inactive metabolites and does not necessarily indicate impairment. Source: Data provided by Colorado Department of Transportation, 8/4/2016.

2015 DATA ARE PRELIMINARY AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE
Better public education campaigns

• Responsible use
• Driving while high
• Youth Prevention

Just say no to D.A.R.E — starting a better conversation about youth drug prevention
The Battles to Come

- Edibles rules and regulations.
- Better research.
- Better Resource Allocation (Housing?)
- Better and enforceable standards for quality control, pesticides, molds, and contaminants.
- Potency
- Home grows
- Advertising
- Commercial Use: Cannabis Lounges and Special Events
- Driving while high
Let’s Stop Asking, “Should we Legalize Marijuana?”

Battling for a return to prohibition or even restructuring the industry exacerbates our challenges to be heard:
A. Facing skepticism from successful grassroots movement.
B. Battling historical credibility gap.
C. No enemy: Little negative connotations to marijuana industry.
D. Missing reliable data and research.
E. Lack of time.

What’s next?

1. National coalitions built around best practices and science.
2. Create new allies (consider some industry).
3. New branding for many of the same lessons.
Questions and Concerns?

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