

What Does Cannabis Legalization Mean for Parents, Schools, and Students?

PTA Council of Baltimore County

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Today's goals



- **Provide an overview** of the new adult-use law
- **Share baseline data** of youth cannabis use in Maryland
- **Provide information** on preventing and reducing youth use

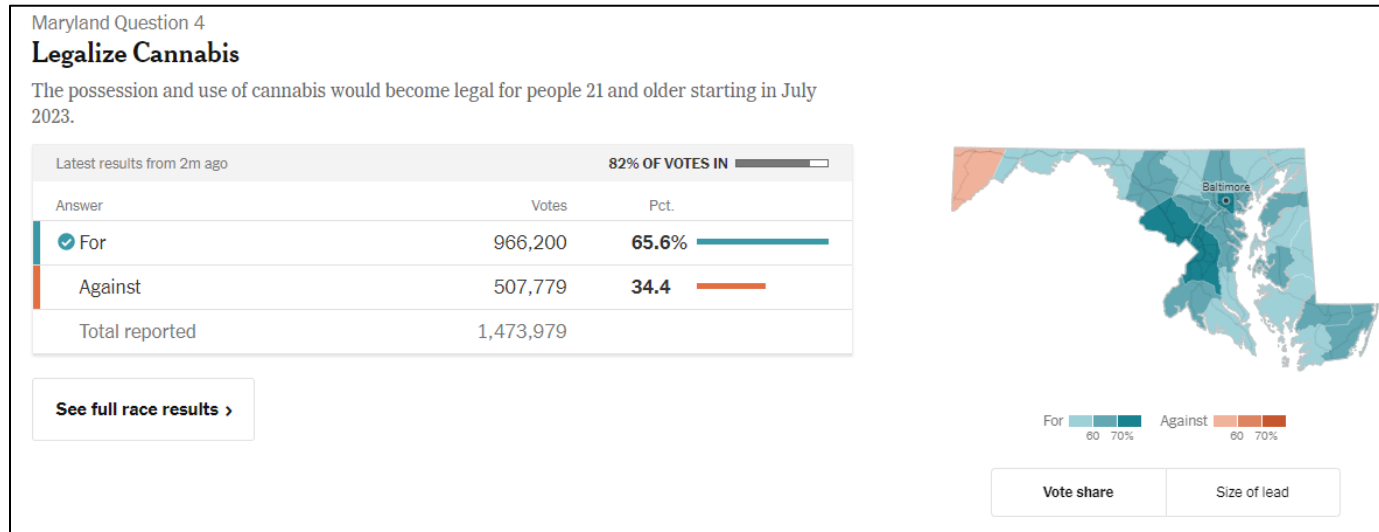


November 8, 2022: Maryland General Election



Ballot Measure: *“Do you favor the legalization of the use of cannabis by an individual who is at least 21 years of age on or after July 1, 2023, in the State of Maryland?”*

- During the Maryland General Election, approximately 67% of Marylanders voted “yes” to Question 4.
- This begins to establish a framework for legal adult-use of cannabis in the state of Maryland.



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A closer look at what legalization means...

- **Starting July 1, 2023**, it will be legal for adults 21+ to use/possess cannabis for personal use (limits on quantity)
- It is not yet legal to purchase or sell cannabis in Maryland.
- **Dispensaries will not be licensed** to sell adult-use cannabis before July 1, 2023.
- **Employers and landlords can** have stricter cannabis-related policies.
- It is *still* illegal to drive under the influence of cannabis.
- Cannabis can't be smoked in public spaces.
- **Resident can grow up to two plants** to be grown per household, inside and out of public view.



2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
445th session of General Assembly
will convene in Annapolis, Maryland
January 11 - April 10, 2023

HB556/SB516 "Cannabis Reform" bill provides a legal sales and licensing infrastructure.



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Adult-use Legalization: Additional Provisions

- **Creates a community reinvestment and repair fund** to provide monies to communities disproportionately impacted by cannabis prohibition and enforcement
- **Creates a business assistance fund** to increase participation in the cannabis industry by small, minority and women-owned businesses
- **Establishes a process to expunge** simple possession cases (<10 g)
- **Establishes a public health fund** to address health effects related to legalizing adult-use

HOUSE BILL 837		(2lr1616)
E1, E2, J1	ENROLLED BILL	
— Judiciary/ Finance and Budget and Taxation —		
Introduced by Delegate Clippinger		
Read and Examined by Proofreaders:		
		Proofreader.
		Proofreader.
Sealed with the Great Seal and presented to the Governor, for his approval this		
_____ day of _____ at _____ o'clock, _____ M.		
		Speaker.
CHAPTER _____		
1	AN ACT concerning	
2	Cannabis Reform	
3	FOR the purpose of requiring the Natalie M. LaPrade Medical Cannabis Commission, in	
4	consultation with certain stakeholders, to conduct a certain baseline study of	
5	cannabis use in the State; establishing the Cannabis Business Assistance Fund in	
6	the Department of Commerce as a special, nonlapsing fund to provide assistance to	
7	small, minority, and women-owned businesses entering the adult-use cannabis	
8	industry; altering certain provisions relating to penalties, charging procedures,	
9	expungement, shielding, and sentencing for certain offenses involving marijuana;	
10	legalizing the use and possession of a certain quantity of marijuana by a person who	
11	is at least a certain age; establishing the Cannabis Public Health Advisory Council;	



Adult-use Legalization: Public Health Advisory Council

Establishes a new **Cannabis Public Health Advisory Council** which must study and make recommendations regarding cannabis regulation to the General Assembly including data-driven approaches on:

- **Best practices and promotion of public health and preventing youth use, misuse and addiction**
- **Impact of cannabis legalization on health of individuals < 21**
- **Initiatives to prevent cannabis use by individuals < 21, including school-based programs**
- Data collection and reporting that measures the impact of cannabis consumption and legalization
- Public health campaigns on advertising, labeling, product testing, and quality control
- Training for healthcare providers
- Any other issues that advance public health related to cannabis use and legalization



Adult-use Legalization:

Study on Methods to Reduce Youth Use

Methods to reduce the use of cannabis by minors:

- Packaging and Labeling
- Advertising Restrictions
- Product Design
- Potency Restrictions
- Enforcement Practices
- Zoning

MMCC recommendations:

- Incorporate existing statutory and regulatory best practices from Maryland's medical cannabis program into the adult-use market/modify and strengthen existing statute for adult use
- Grant authority to cannabis regulators to adopt further regulations to reduce youth access
- Direct the Public Health Advisory Council to study and consider other emerging regulatory trends



Adult-use Legalization

Comprehensive Baseline Study of Cannabis Use

- In consultation with MDH; BHA; the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services; the Maryland Poison Center, the Health Information Exchange; and the Maryland Hospital Association
- What it covers:
 - Patterns of use (frequency, methods of consumption, and general perceptions) among different age groups, and pregnant/breastfeeding individuals
 - Incidents of impaired driving, including accidents/fatalities
 - Hospitalizations
 - Diagnosis of cannabis use disorder and problem use

[Maryland Cannabis Use Baseline Study](#)



Maryland Cannabis Use Baseline Study

Statutory Authority and Requirements: Maryland's Health-General Article, Title 13, Subtitle 44: Cannabis Use Baseline Study, requires the Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission to conduct a comprehensive baseline study of cannabis use in the state that includes a survey of patterns of use, perceptions, public health and safety, and cannabis-related healthcare utilization, and report findings to the Maryland Governor and the General Assembly. The appendices to this report provide detailed data for the required indicators.

3-1-2023

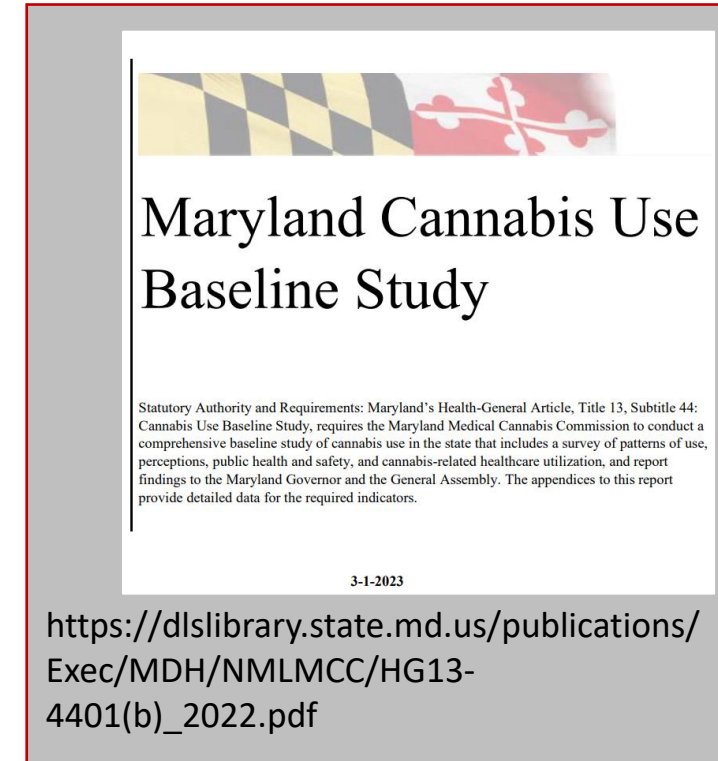


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Comprehensive Baseline Study of Cannabis Use

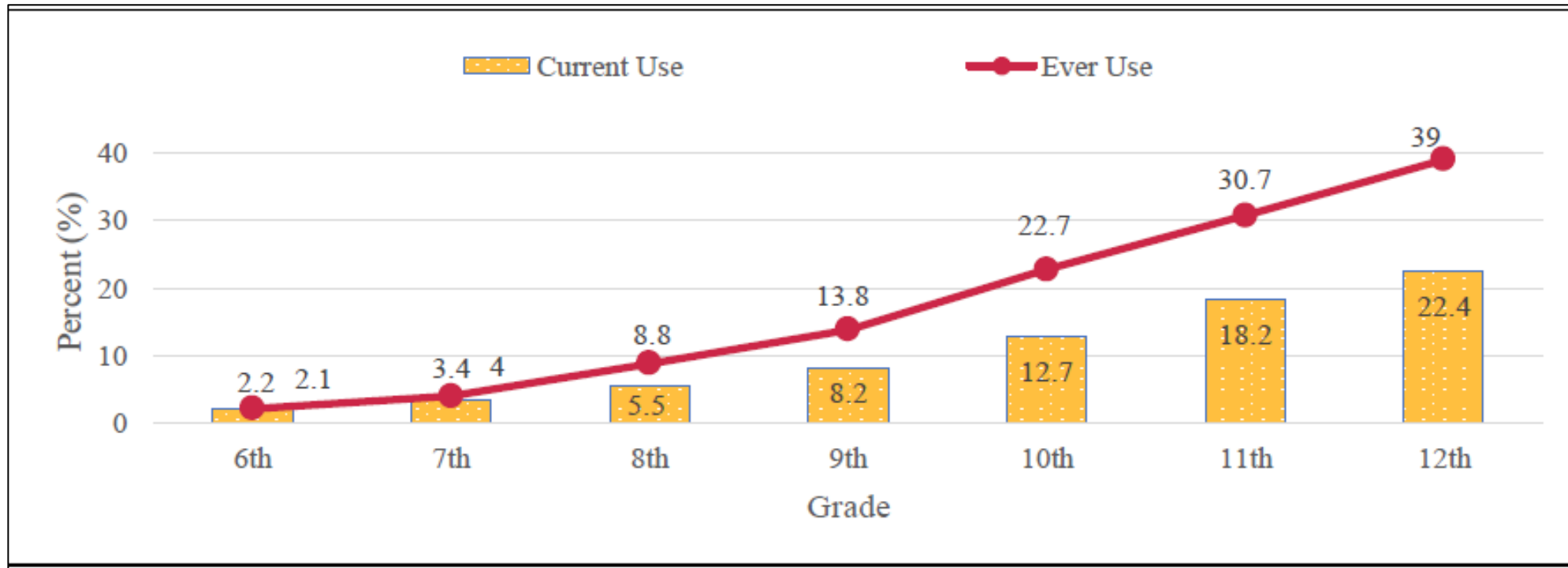
Key Findings for High School Youth (2021-22 school year)

- More than 1 in 4 (26%) of Maryland HS students have ever tried cannabis.
- 15% of HS students report current use (in past 30 days)
- About 1/3 of current HS users use $\geq 10x$ /month.
- Current use was slightly higher in females than males and more than 50% higher in students who identify as LGBT.
- About 5% of HS students tried cannabis for the first time before age 13.



How many Maryland youth are using cannabis?

Current and Ever Cannabis Use Among Maryland Students by Grade (2021-2022)

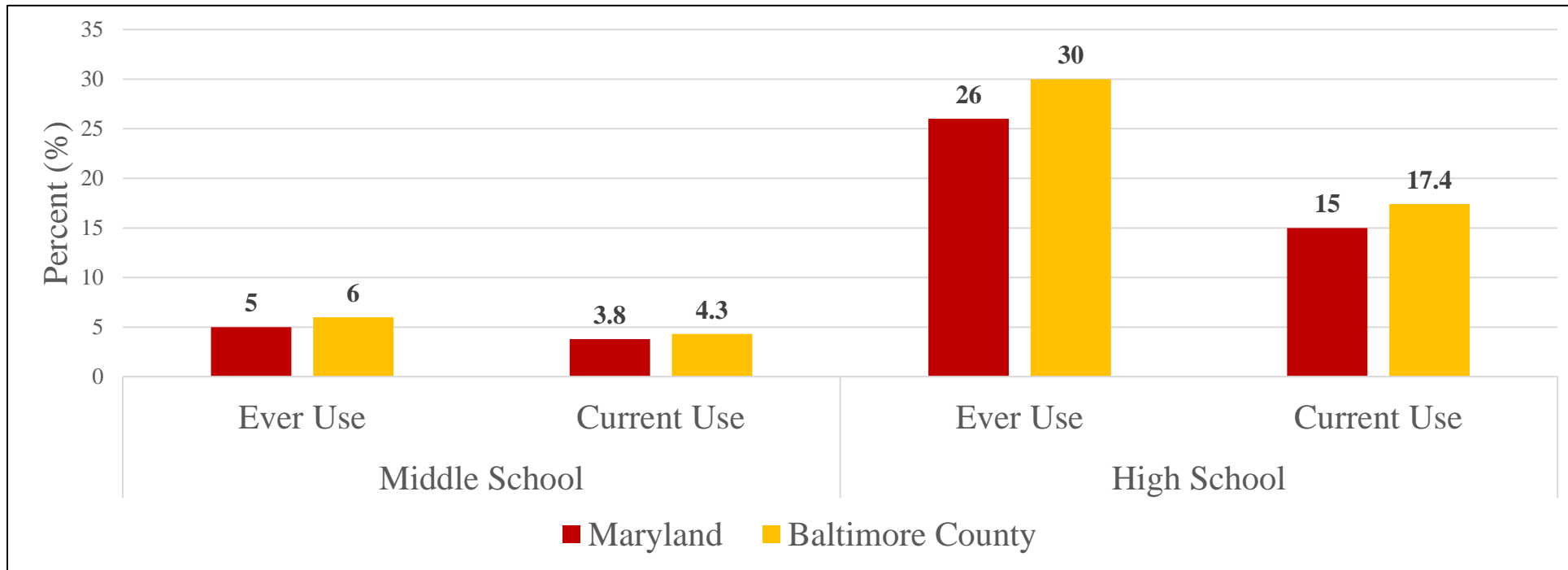


Source: MD YRBS/YTS 2021-2022

- **Current and ever use** steadily increases with each grade level.
- **Nearly 40% of 12th grade students** have tried cannabis at least one time (ever use).
- **About 4% of MS students and 15% of HS students** report use in past 30 days (current use).
- Use among **Maryland students is lower than U.S.** for all grade levels.

How many Baltimore County youth use cannabis?

Current and Ever Cannabis Use Among Maryland and Baltimore County Students (2021-2022)

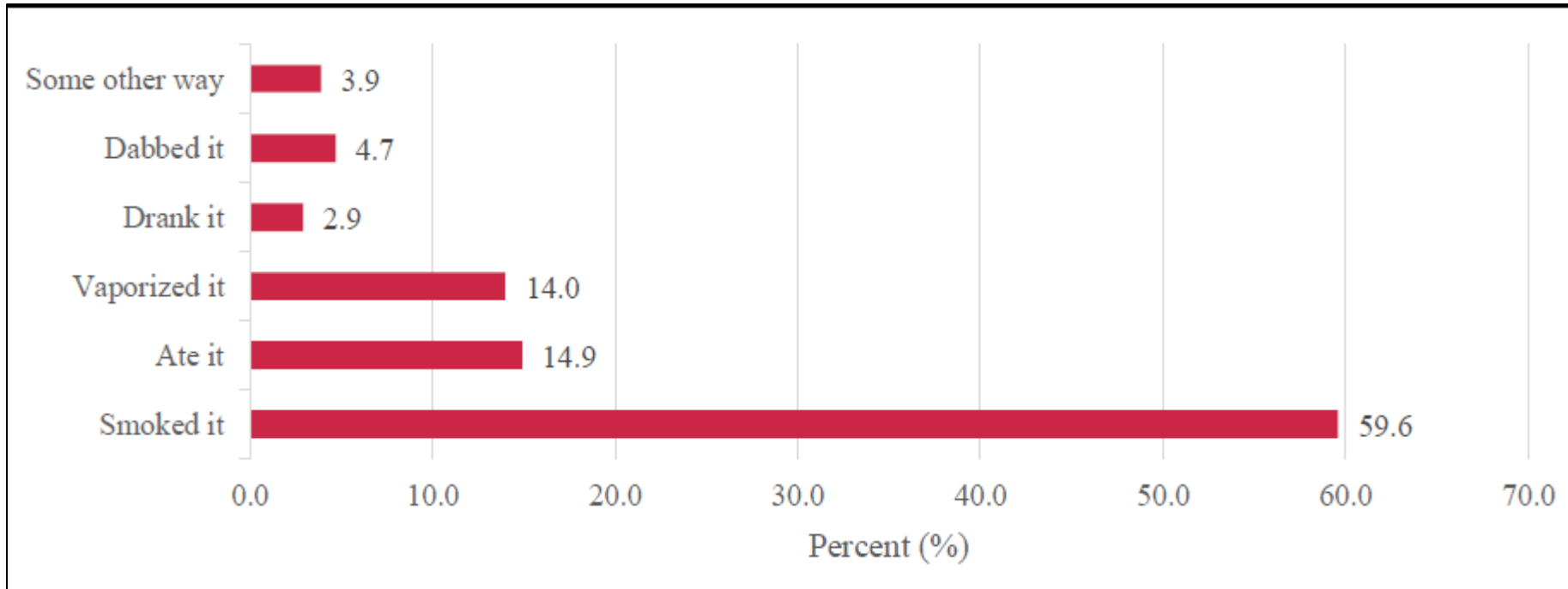


Source: MD YRBS/YTS 2021-2022

- In 2021-2022, ever use and current use was higher in Baltimore County than Maryland overall.
- **30% of Baltimore County** HS students have tried cannabis at least once.
- **More than 17%** BCHS students used cannabis in the prior month.

What “methods” do Maryland youth use?

Usual Method of Consumption Among High School Students Who Currently Use Cannabis

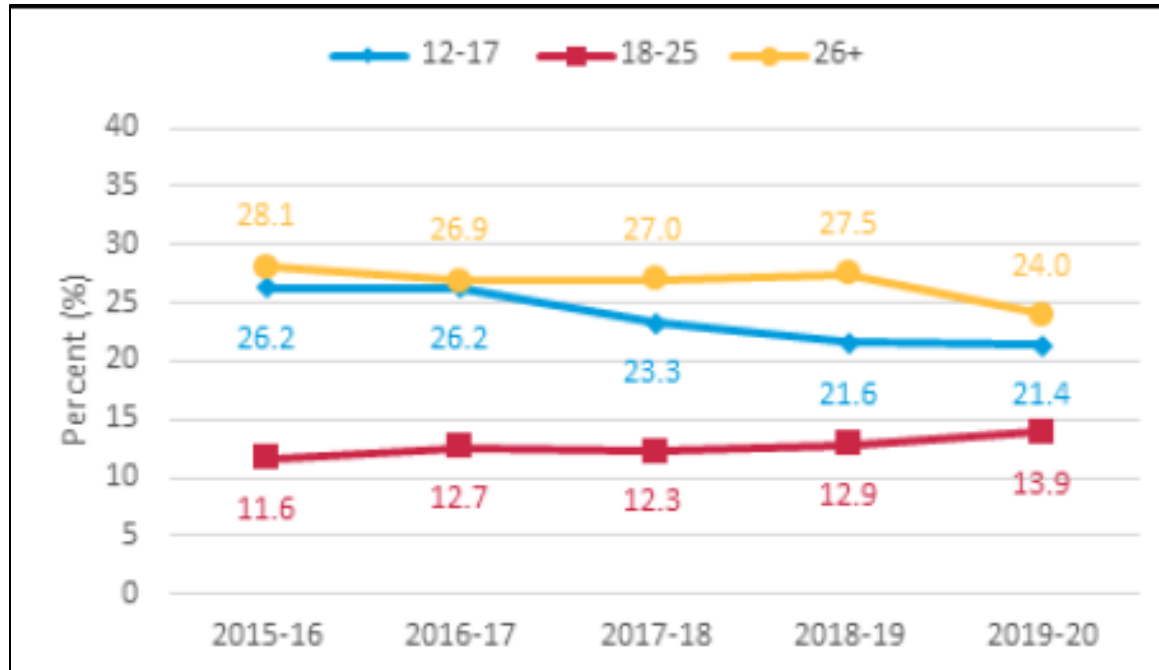


Source: MD YRBS/YTS 2021-2022

- **Smoking** was the most common method of consumption.
- **Consuming edibles and vaping** were reported at similar rates.

How harmful do youth perceive cannabis to be?

Perceptions of “Great Risk” from Smoking Cannabis Monthly Among Marylanders Ages 12+, 2015-2020



Source: NSDUH

Why this matters:

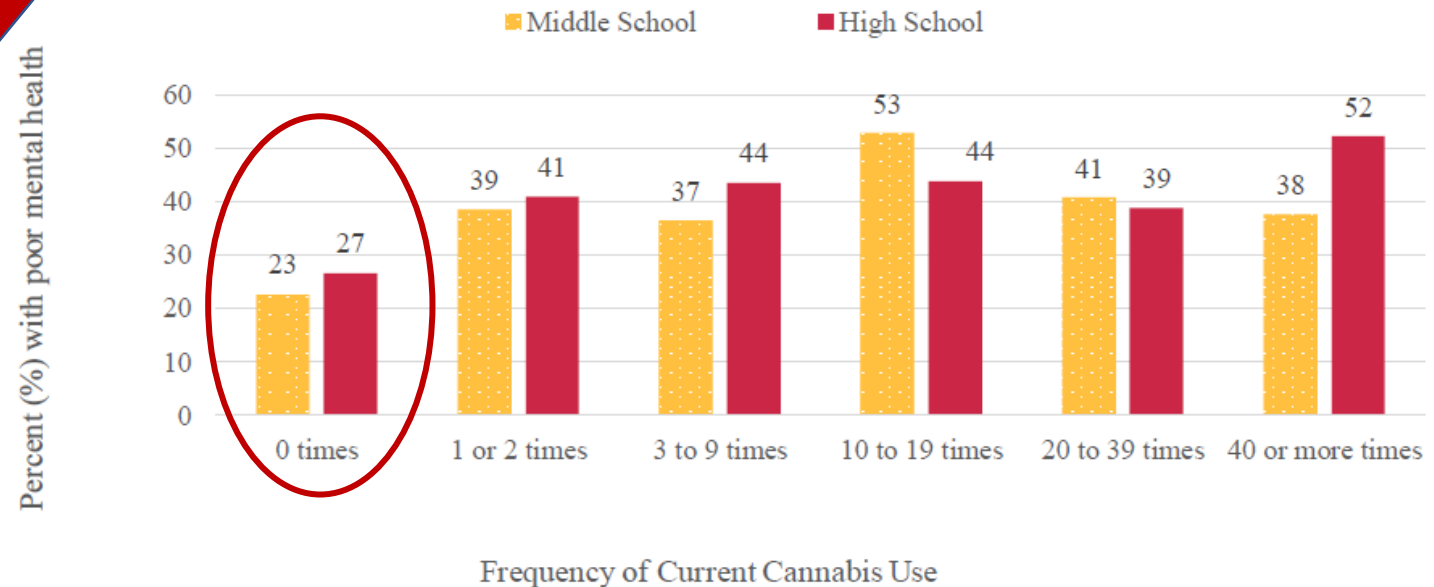
- Risk perception influences a person's decision to use drugs (as well as to seek help)
- Teens may view cannabis as harmless, but today's cannabis contains up to **4x** more THC than 30 years ago.
- Some “concentrated” products are even more potent.

- Perception of risk is decreasing among 12–17-year-olds
- Perception of risk is lowest among 18–25-year-olds

More on youth, cannabis, and mental health

- MS and HS students who use cannabis were **nearly 50% more likely to report poor mental health** compared to students who did not use cannabis.
- Cannabis can make anxiety and depression **worse** (*US Nat'l Drug Control Policy*).
- Important to continue to study cannabis and mental health as well as continued monitoring of Maryland students.

Frequency of Past 30-Day Cannabis Use among MS and HS Students in Maryland Who Reported Poor Mental Health



Source: MD YRBS/YTS 2021-2022

“Delta-8” THC Products

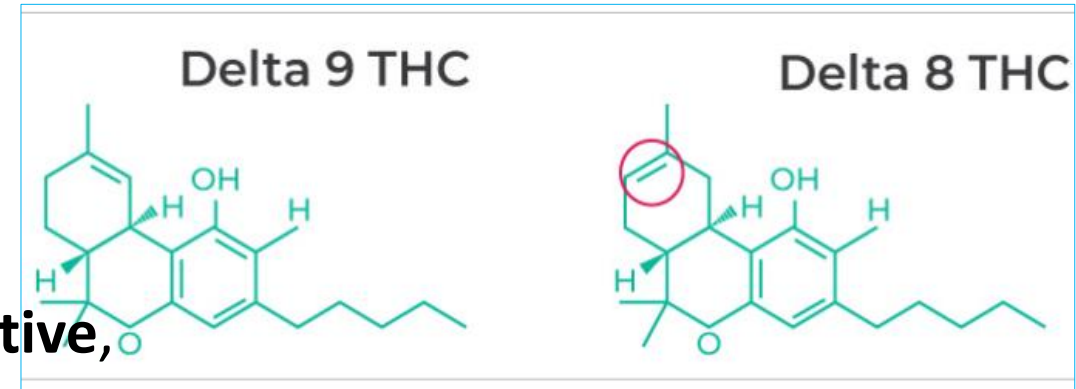
- 2018 Farm Bill legalized hemp on the federal level.
- Hemp refers to certain types of cannabis plants and is federally legal.
- Marijuana is frequently referred to as cannabis and is federally illegal (though several states have legalized).
- Hemp and marijuana are legal distinctions to describe the allowable limit of THC in the cannabis sativa plant.
 - Hemp: $< 0.3\%$ Delta-9 THC by weight
 - Marijuana: $\geq 0.3\%$ Delta-9 THC by weight
- Cannabinoids (e.g. CBD, CBG, CBN, THC) are present in both hemp and marijuana.

Rope. Not dope.



Hemp vs Marijuana (It's ALL Cannabis)

- Extracted from hemp and converted into **psychoactive, intoxicating** semi-synthetic compounds that have not been studied widely for safety in human consumption.
- **Available for purchase** at gas stations, convenience stores, vape shops, hemp/CBD shops, etc.
- Sold as gummies, candies, vape pens/cartridges, oils, tinctures, edibles, joints, or beverages.
- FDA has sent warning letters and consumer updates but does not regulate/enforce hemp sales.
- **Products are sold but not regulated in Maryland.**
- Pending legislation would change this, requiring a license to sell all products over 0.3% THC.
- MMCC conducted a study Summer 2022 and found labels often claimed *higher* potency than tests showed.



Will legalization increase youth access/use?



- **Colorado** – no significant effects on youth use (*Prev. Sci. 2019*)
- **Washington State** – mixed findings (*No effect - Jama Pediatric 2019, Increase – JAMA*)
- **Meta-analysis** – small increase in youth use (*BMJ Open 2019*).
- **Columbia U. study** – no increases in odds of past-year/past-month cannabis use among 12- to 20-year-olds for all race/ethnicity groups (*JAMA Netw Open, 2021*)
- **Bottom line?** It's too soon to draw definitive conclusions.



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But what if they are already experimenting/using?

How to minimize cannabis-associated risks

- Youth should not use any amount of cannabis
- There is no recommended “dose”
- Dose or standard servings (i.e., an equivalent to unit of alcohol) is an emerging concept in cannabis
- Anyone using cannabis should **start low, go slow**
- Use of a regulated “legal” product reduces risk for contamination (i.e., heavy metals, fentanyl, salmonella)
- Make a plan, don’t drive

Signs of too much cannabis, or cannabis intoxication:

- extreme confusion
- paranoia
- anxiety
- panic
- hallucinations
- disorientation or delusions
- increased blood pressure
- fast heart rate
- shortness of breath
- shaking or severe nausea

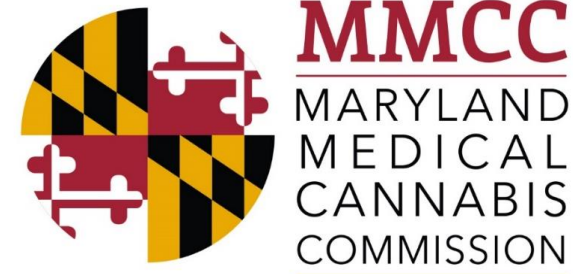


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Youth Prevention Messages

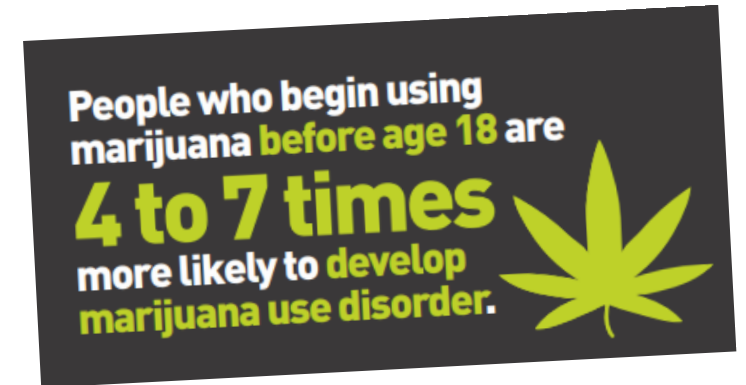


- **Most youth aren't using cannabis.** 85% of Maryland students have not used cannabis in the past month. Three out of four have never tried it.
(2021-2022 MD YRBS/YTS)
- **Medical cannabis** is intended to treat chronic pain, anorexia, PTSD and other serious health conditions, not get “high.”
- Like alcohol and other drugs, cannabis can affect your ability to drive safely. **Don't drive or ride in the car** with someone who has been using cannabis.
- **“Legal” and “Natural” don't mean safe.** Tobacco and alcohol are legal.
- **Youth are more vulnerable** to psychoactive drugs, including cannabis.



Youth Prevention Messages – Health Risks

- **Changes to the brain.** THC acts directly on the brain, which continues to develop until about age 25. Regular cannabis use during teen years and early adulthood may harm memory, learning, and attention – and effects may be long term. (*Nat'l Academies Sci 2017, PLoS One 2013, Neuropsych 2016*)
- **Potential for addiction.** The risk for addiction increases when cannabis is used regularly and before age 18. (*Drug Alcohol Depend. 2008, 2015*)
- **Cannabis smoke contains many of the same carcinogens as tobacco smoke.** Emerging research suggests correlation between cannabis SHS and potential adverse effects in youth.
- **Worse mental health and wellbeing.** Frequent cannabis use has been linked to more depressive symptoms as well as lower grades and skipping school. (*Curr Addict Rep 2019, Drug Alcohol Depend 2017*).



Signs of problematic use

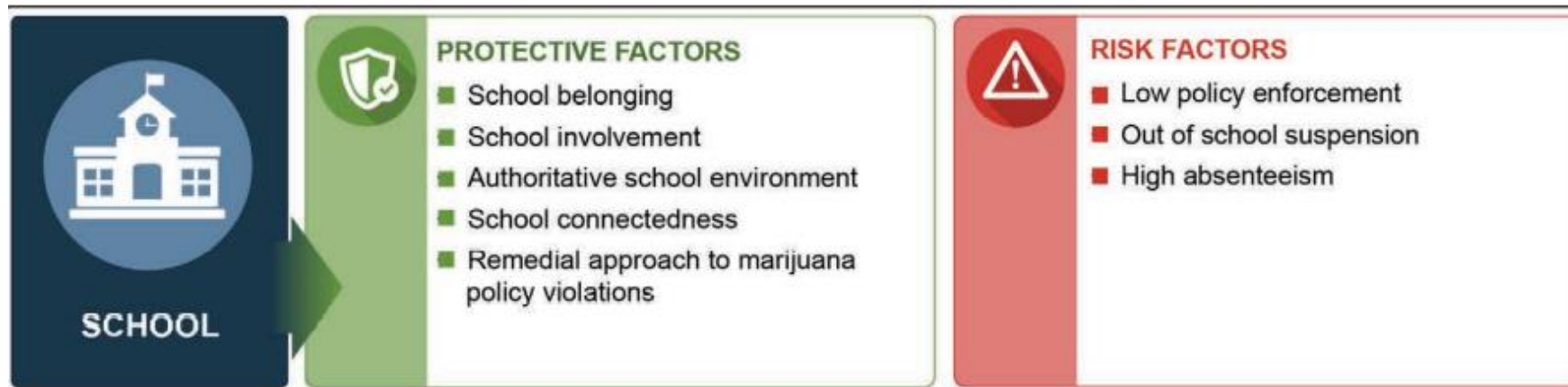
- **Changes in mood** (irritability, paranoia, indifference)
- **Bloodshot eyes**, lack of coordination, slow movement or walking
- **Loss of interest** in academics, extracurricular activities, hobbies, sports
- **Lack of focus**, poor class attendance, low grades
- **Disregard** for school rules and conduct problems
- **Failure to fulfill** responsibilities at school

- **Educators have an opportunity** to identify problem use and help protect teens' health
- **Schools can help** guide them toward the help they need



Cannabis and the school environment – protective factors

- **Disciplinary policies influence cannabis use** – health-centered approaches (i.e., counseling, education) have been found to result in less cannabis use vs more punitive measures (i.e., suspension, expulsion) *(Amer J Pub Health 2015)*
- **The level of connection** students feel to their school, fellow students, and academics is associated with student marijuana use (higher connection/lower usage), as well as **student involvement in activities/clubs** *(J Youth Adolesc 2015 and 2018)*



SAMSHA Preventing Marijuana Use Among Youth



Summary of youth prevention and harm reduction strategies for schools



- **Encourage students to avoid or delay using cannabis.** Reinforce to students that cannabis carries risks to their health, which may be long-term. Remind students that cannabis remains illegal for those under 21.
- **Know and share the facts about cannabis.** Explore the topic through assignments, classroom debates, discussion of current events or schoolwide projects.
- **Promote protective factors** such as school and community connections.
- **Help identify ways for students to manage stress** without the use of substances (i.e., engaging in clubs, sports, or talking with a counselor, trusted friend or adult.)
- **Help students who show signs of use.** Encourage them to talk to a trusted adult, coach, counselor, health care providers or cultural/faith leader.
- **Communicate the school's substance use policy.** A health-driven (vs disciplinary) approach that focuses on reasons or motivations for use may be more effective in eliminating risky behaviors and promoting healthy alternatives.
- **Remind students they have a choice not to use cannabis.** Most students do not regularly use cannabis.
- **Remind students never to ride in a car with a driver who is under the influence** of any substances, including cannabis.

Key information for parents/guardians



- **You can influence your teen's opinions about cannabis use.** Parents are the #1 influence on youth substance use. [Marijuana: Facts Parents Need to Know Talking to Your Kids: Communicating the Risks | NIDA \(nih.gov\)](#).
- **Today's cannabis is much stronger than in the past.** Some cannabis products known as “concentrates” are particularly potent.
- **Driving while high is not safer than driving while drunk.** Like alcohol, cannabis affects judgment and general motor skills, which is especially risky for new and inexperienced drivers.
- **If you use cannabis, avoid doing so in front of your teen and safely store it – locked – and out of sight** from youth and pets.
- **If your teen is using cannabis, stay calm** and talk with them about your concerns. If needed, seek help from your pediatrician, school, or community resources.



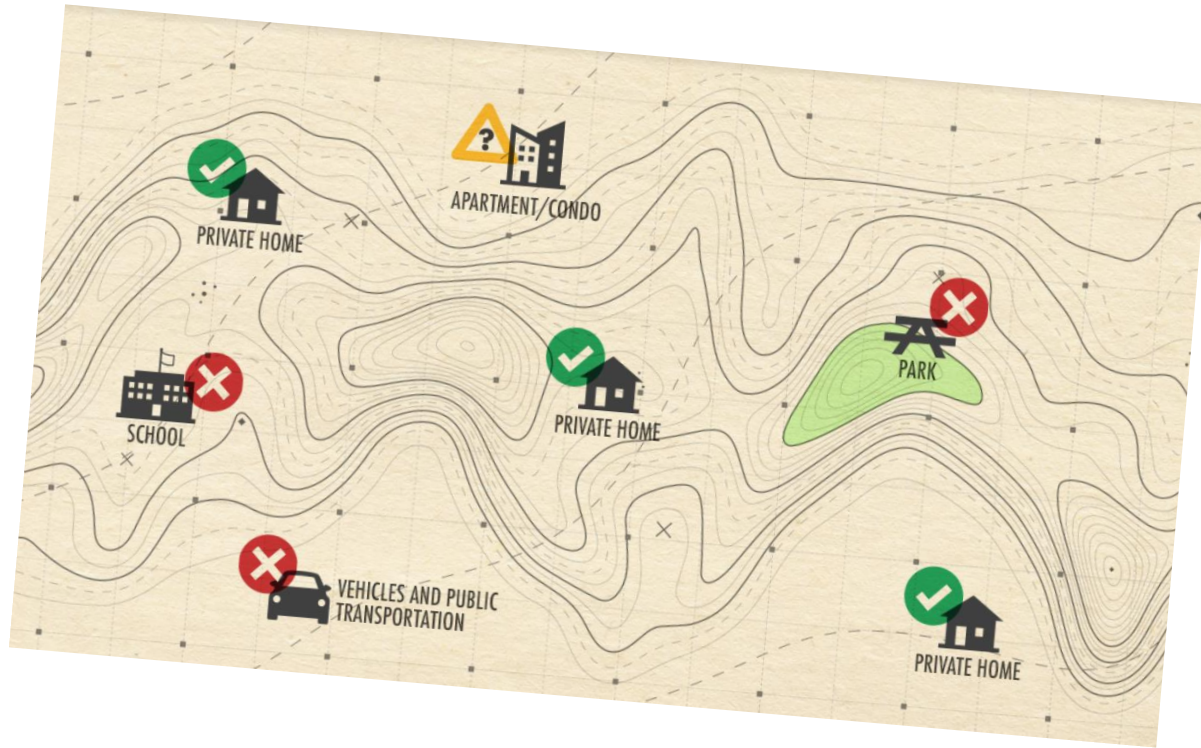
New Public Education Campaign

Commission has launched a public awareness and responsible use campaign:



Learn more about adult-use legalization at cannabis.maryland.gov

Questions?



For more information, email: dawn.berkowitz@maryland.gov
or go to cannabis.maryland.gov

