

7 Harmful Side Effects Pot Legalization Has Caused in Colorado

By Cully Stimson

DailySignal.com | August 20, 2014

There is more bad news out of Colorado regarding the negative impact of marijuana legalization.

As I reported a few weeks ago, some professors published a peer-reviewed article on the negative social costs to outright legalization. I noted that although overall traffic fatalities in Colorado have gone down since 2007, they went up by 100 percent for operators testing positive for marijuana—from 39 in 2007 to 78 in 2012. (Colorado legalized marijuana for medical usage in 2009, before legalizing marijuana for other uses in 2012.) Furthermore, in 2007, those pot-positive drivers represented only 7 percent of total fatalities in Colorado, but in 2012 they represented 16 percent of total Colorado fatalities.

Now, there is even more proof from Colorado that legalizing pot, as I have argued before, is a terrible public policy.

This new report paints an even bleaker picture of what is happening in Colorado since it legalized the possession, sale, and consumption of marijuana.

According to the new report by the Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area entitled “The Legalization of Marijuana in Colorado: The Impact,” the impact of legalized marijuana in Colorado has resulted in:

1. The majority of DUI drug arrests involve marijuana and 25 to 40 percent were marijuana alone.
2. In 2012, 10.47 percent of Colorado youth ages 12 to 17 were considered current marijuana users compared to 7.55 percent nationally. Colorado ranked fourth in the nation, and was 39 percent higher than the national average.
3. Drug-related student suspensions/expulsions increased 32 percent from school years 2008-09 through 2012-13, the vast majority were for marijuana violations.
4. In 2012, 26.81 percent of college age students were considered current marijuana users compared to 18.89 percent nationally, which ranks Colorado third in the nation and 42 percent above the national average.
5. In 2013, 48.4 percent of Denver adult arrestees tested positive for marijuana, which is a 16 percent increase from 2008.

6. From 2011 through 2013 there was a 57 percent increase in marijuana-related emergency room visits.

7. Hospitalizations related to marijuana has increased 82 percent since 2008.

The report includes other data about the negative effect of legalizing marijuana in Colorado, including marijuana-related exposure to children, treatment, the flood of marijuana in and out of Colorado, the dangers of pot extraction labs and other disturbing factual trends.

Don't expect this data to impact the push to legalize pot in Colorado, or elsewhere for that matter. Big pot is big business, and the push to legalize is really all about profit, despite inconvenient facts.

Drug policy should be based on hard science and reliable data. And the data coming out of Colorado points to one and only one conclusion: the legalization of marijuana in the state is terrible public policy.