

Colorado high school getting higher

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DrThurstone.com | Oct 21, 2014

As the small, Colorado town of Manitou Springs gears up for a city council vote that will determine whether marijuana stores can continue to operate within its limits, a physician there is reporting troubling numbers out of Manitou Springs High School.

After reviewing the results of his public-records requests, **Dr. Kenneth Finn is urging city officials to consider not just tax revenues generated from marijuana sales, but also social costs associated with the drug's use — especially social costs harming kids.** Manitou Springs' first recreational store opened Aug. 1 and reportedly will pay \$223,122 in taxes for the period between July 31 and Oct. 7. At the same time, the store's opening correlates with big problems, says Finn, a physician at Springs Rehabilitation who is board-certified in physical medicine and rehabilitation and pain medicine. Also a self-described "proud Manitou parent," he reports:

- Marijuana-related problems at Manitou Springs High School have increased significantly this academic year. For the past seven school years, the school has reported an average of one marijuana-related incident per month. However, since school started Aug. 25, there already have been 14 marijuana-related incidents — an average of seven per month at the current rate.

- The number of homeless students — those reporting no stable, physical address — attending the school has doubled. The influx of homeless youth at the school is consistent with reports from Denver-area homeless shelters, including those focused on helping teens and young adults. (see video below)

"I thoroughly enjoy the community, but we have a real problem on our hands," Finn said. "I wouldn't consider this a social experiment because in an experiment, you actually care about data collection and analysis and the outcome. Right now, people will talk about tax revenue, **but they're not bothering to calculate the costs of marijuana.**"