

New SAM report documents impact of three years of marijuana legalization in Colorado and Washington

Human cost of industry-friendly policies include higher marijuana use among minors, more marijuana-related DUIs, more child poisonings

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[WASHINGTON, DC] - Using data from Colorado and Washington, [a new report](#) compiled by Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM) shows that marijuana use is up, driving incidents related to marijuana have increased, and poisonings and ER admissions from THC use are on the rise in both Colorado and Washington. The report, available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#), is an update from its first iteration released in January 2015. It represents an effort to compile publicly-available information about the health and safety consequences of such policies.

"By almost every measure, the negative consequences in Colorado and Washington are piling up," said Kevin Sabet, President and co-founder of SAM. "Just because our government is not documenting the problems systematically, it doesn't mean it can't be done. It's important people understand what the facts say - and reject the spin coming from Big Marijuana."

Jo McGuire, co-chair of Colorado SAM, agreed. "We rushed to legalize marijuana in Colorado without a full understanding of the consequences. Now that we see those consequences, we must rethink the solution. The right policies clearly do not include the massive commercialization and glorification of drug use for profit of an industry."

Among the report's findings:

- Colorado now leads the country in past-month marijuana use by youth, with Washington in 6th place.
- Past-year use rates in both states are far outpacing the national average.
- Marijuana is now related to a record high of 33% of DUI cases in Washington state.
- Marijuana poisonings are up 148% in Colorado since legalization, and up 153% among children 0 to 5 years old.
- In 2015, drug crimes rose 12.5% in the city and county of Denver, and homicides were up over 74%.
- An outsized impact on minority and disadvantaged communities in Denver, with one lower-income neighborhood reporting a marijuana business for every 47 residents.

"What we are seeing is the natural consequence of industry-friendly policies on human health and safety," noted Jeffrey Zinsmeister, SAM's Executive Vice President. "The

results will surprise no one that has seen the size and power of the marijuana lobby in these states -- a lobby that is now seeking special treatment in other states like Massachusetts and Maine via ballot initiatives."

For more information about marijuana use and its effects, please visit <http://www.learnaboutsam.org>.

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About SAM

Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM) is a nonpartisan, non-profit alliance of physicians, policy makers, prevention workers, treatment and recovery professionals, scientists, and other concerned citizens opposed to marijuana legalization who want health and scientific evidence to guide marijuana policies. SAM has affiliates in 31 states.

www.learnaboutsam.org