

“Medical” Marijuana

Pro-marijuana group admits the key to full legalization is legalizing “medical marijuana” first. “The key to it is medical access, because once you have hundreds of thousands of people using marijuana under medical supervision the whole scam is going to be bought. Once there’s medical access...then we will get full legalization.” Richard Cowan, former director of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana.

Medical marijuana is legal in California. Los Angeles now has more pot “dispensaries” than churches. IN 1996, CA passed Prop 215 which legalized medical marijuana. In 2005 there were 4 pot stores, one year later there were 98. In the Oct. 15th, 2009 LA Times article reported “...800 medical-marijuana dispensaries in Los Angeles.” District Attorney Steve Cooley states, “...about 100 percent...are dealing marijuana illegally.”

States with medical marijuana laws have the highest use by adolescents and young adults, ages 12-25. (*“Summary of Findings from the 1999 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse,” Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, August 2000.*)

When cannabis laws are relaxed, perception of risk goes down and use goes up.

(*“Summary of Findings from the 1999 National household Survey on Drug Abuse,” Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, August 2000.*)

Perception of risk declines among adolescents:

- Among eighth-graders from 40.4 percent in 1991 to 29 percent in 2000.
- Among 10th-graders from 30 percent in 1991 to 18.5 percent in 2000.
- Among 12th-graders from 27.1 percent in 1991 to 13.7 percent in 2000.

(*The 2000 federal government-funded Monitoring the Future annual adolescent drug-use survey from 1991–2000*)

Marijuana use increased among adolescents:

- Eighth-graders’ use increased from 10.2 percent in 1991 to 20.3 percent in 2000.
- 10th-graders’ use increased from 23.4 percent in 1991 to 40.3 percent in 2000.
- 12th-graders’ use increased from 36.7 percent in 1991 to 48.8 percent in 2000.

(*The 2000 federal government-funded Monitoring the Future annual adolescent drug-use survey from 1991–2000*)

Marijuana use is related to increased mental-health problems. A February 2001 article in *The British Journal of Psychiatry* states that regular use of marijuana may increase mental-health problems, including depression, problems with concentration and memory, isolation from others, lack of motivation, impairments of psychomotor performance with implications for car and train driving, airplane piloting and academic performance.

(continued...)

Marijuana use found to worsen psychotic* and schizophrenia spectrum disorders.**

(P. Le Bec, M. Fatseas, C. Denis, E. Lavie, M. Auriacombe; *Encephale*, 35(4), 377-385 (2009). (W. Hall, L. Degenhardt, M. Teesson; *Drug Alcohol Rev.*, 23(4), 433-443 (2004). *(H. Verdous, M. Tournier; *Epidemiol. Psychiatr. Soc.*, 13(2), 113-119 (2004)*

Marijuana use affects brain activities, memory effectiveness and general health, including exacerbating the medical condition in treatment, further impairment of respiratory related diseases and aggravated infectious disorders. (D.P. Tashkin, M.D. Roth; *'Marijuana and the Cannaboids'*, Humana Press, New York (NY), 253-275 (2007))

A link exists between marijuana use and heart attacks, cancers, tumor growths and the immune system, according to Dr. Murray Mittleman of the Harvard School of Public Health addressing the American Heart Association conference on March 6, 2000. And a December 1999 article in *Cancer Epidemiology Biomarkers and Prevention* found a link between marijuana use and cancerous tumors of the head and neck. Also, the July 2000 issue of *The Journal of Immunology* found THC (main psychoactive substance in marijuana) could promote tumor growth by impairing the body's anti-tumor immunity system and suppress immunity against legionella pneumophila (bacteria that causes legionnaire's disease).

HIV/AIDS — Studies indicate that cannabis use can accelerate the progression of HIV to whole AIDS, in addition to the increase possibility of Kaposi's Sarcoma and infections that endanger an already disabled immune system. (D.P. Tashkin, M.D. Roth; *'Marijuana and the Cannaboids'*, Humana Press, New York (NY), 253-275 (2007))

Marijuana smoke more dangerous than cigarette smoke. A fourfold increase of tar is deposited in lungs from marijuana use than cigarette use. (D.P. Tashkin, M.D. Roth; *'Marijuana and the Cannaboids'*, Humana Press, New York (NY), 253-275 (2007))

Marijuana is addictive and recovery is difficult. The November 2000 issue of *Experimental and Clinical Psychopharmacology* reports that researchers have identified marijuana withdrawal symptoms as significant in 60 percent of study participants. A study in 2000 by Australia's National Drug and Alcohol Research Center found that only 10 percent of marijuana addicts were able to stop using the drug after a series of counseling sessions.

Marijuana-related emergency room visits increased. A 1999 *Drug Abuse Warning Network* report found that visits to the hospital emergency departments because of marijuana use have risen steadily during the 1990s from an estimated 15,706 visits in 1990 to 87,150 in 1999—a 455 percent increase. Patients 35 years old or older experienced the largest increase in marijuana mentions: 1,078 percent, from 2,160 to 25,453, 1990 to 1999. Among children between the ages of 12 and 17, marijuana mentions increased 489 percent (from 2,170 to 12,784) over the same period. ■

