

# *Marijuana: Laws and Lessons to Inform North Carolina Policy Summary*

Community Impact NC published [Marijuana: Laws and Lessons to Inform North Carolina Policy](#) to describe lessons learned from states that have legalized marijuana. The publication is summarized below.

## Federal and State Laws

It is illegal under the federal Controlled Substances Act to manufacture, distribute, or possess marijuana.<sup>i</sup> Under the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, it is illegal to market non-FDA-approved marijuana products with claims that they can prevent, diagnose, treat, or cure any medical condition.<sup>ii</sup>

Many states have enacted laws legalizing marijuana to varying degrees. State marijuana controls may include the following:

- **Oversight.** A single entity regulates marijuana cultivation, processing, testing, and sale.
- **Production.** State law requires licenses for cultivation and processing.
- **Sale.** Sellers must follow rules on licensure, security, recordkeeping, purchase age, etc.
- **Location.** State law limits the number of marijuana retailers within an area or prohibits them from operating around schools and playgrounds.
- **Taxes.** The state imposes taxes on marijuana cultivation, distribution, and retail sale.
- **Driving.** In all 50 states and the District of Columbia, it is illegal for individuals to operate a vehicle under the influence of marijuana.<sup>iii</sup>

## Statistics

A 2020 report by the **Alaska** Department of Health and Social Services showed that, after the state legalized marijuana in 2016, the perceived harm from marijuana use among youth decreased.<sup>iv</sup> One in five Alaska young people perceived great harm from using marijuana monthly as compared with one in four nationally.<sup>v</sup>

Eight years after **Colorado** legalized marijuana, the state reported a 135% increase in traffic deaths in which the driver tested positive for marijuana.<sup>vi</sup> Colorado Children's Hospital saw a 27% increase in children receiving treatment for marijuana toxicity.<sup>vii</sup> The costs of marijuana legalization in Colorado exceeded marijuana tax revenue at a rate of almost \$3.50 for every dollar raised.<sup>viii</sup>

**Washington** saw an increase in use of marijuana in all age groups every year for seven years after legalization, with the largest increase among young adults aged 18-24. After legalization, the percentage of high school students in King County, home of Seattle Public Schools, that perceived marijuana use as harmful decreased by three percent.<sup>ix</sup>

## Societal Impacts

Low-income neighborhoods appear to be targeted by marijuana retailers, with 40-45% of retail stores located where the average earnings are in the bottom 25th percentile.<sup>x</sup>

Hospitals in states that have legalized marijuana report up to a threefold increase in emergency department visits related to marijuana use, and calls to poison control centers have doubled.<sup>xi</sup>

Marijuana is associated with intimate partner violence, demonstrating that THC increases a person's risk for paranoid thinking and psychosis and contributes to violent behaviors.<sup>xii</sup>

Marijuana use is associated with increases in workplace accidents, injuries, and employee absenteeism.<sup>xiii</sup>

Read CINC's [Marijuana Laws and Lessons to Inform North Carolina Policy](#) for more information on the outcomes of marijuana legalization.

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21 U.S.C. § 812

21 U.S.C. § 9

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