

### Considerations

- The Riverhead Community Coalition for Safe and Drug-Free Youth respects that the State of New York has allowed for individuals and their caretakers to receive medical marijuana through a certification process within the regulations of the Compassionate Care Act.
- The Riverhead Community Coalition for Safe and Drug-Free Youth is not acting in any legal capacity. The information in this article is based on the impact of marijuana dispensaries based on states that have already passed and implemented medical marijuana programs.

**Conflicts with Other Existing Policies:** State laws surrounding the legalization of marijuana use conflicts with federal law. The production, distribution, sale, possession, and use of marijuana is still against, and may be prosecuted under, US federal law<sup>1</sup>. In addition, even with the legalization of medical marijuana in New York State, marijuana use is still prohibited by many employers. Many banks will not work with marijuana businesses in fear of breaking the law themselves. As a result, marijuana dispensaries are a cash business. This increases the chances of the facilities being robbed.<sup>2</sup>

**Improper Use of Marijuana:** Medical marijuana dispensaries within our community increase the supply within the community. When medical marijuana gets into the hands of those who are not prescribed, it increases the chances of them using it improperly. Marijuana-related calls to poison control centers in Washington and Colorado have increased significantly since the states have legalized sales. The Washington Poison Center saw a jump by more than half for calls related to marijuana exposure, from 158 in 2013 to 246 in 2014.<sup>3</sup> Approximately half of Washington's calls last year involved hospital visits. Washington saw its biggest increase in calls concerning teens, from 40 in 2013 to 61 in 2014. Calls to the poison control center related to marijuana exposure started to increase when medical marijuana was first legalized and have increased each year since then.<sup>4</sup>

**Youth Impact:** According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 30 day marijuana use among teens increased by 33 percent in medical marijuana states, but only by 6 percent in the rest of the country. In 2005, only about 20 percent of the U.S. population lived in medical marijuana states, yet those states accounted for more than two-thirds of the increase in youth use between 2005 and 2011.<sup>5</sup>

---

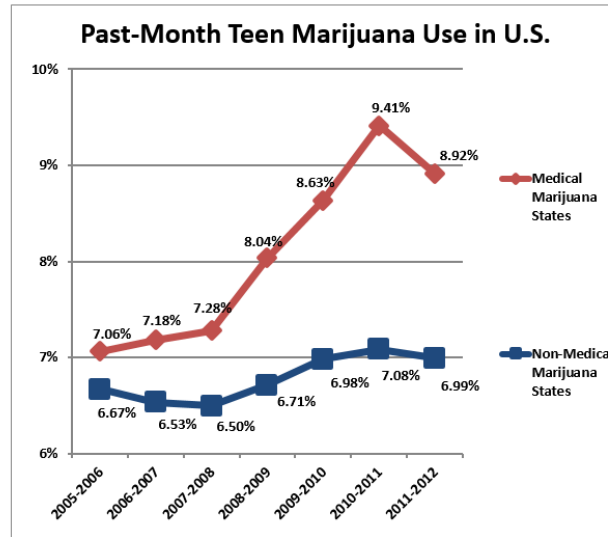
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/state-laws-related-to-marijuana>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2015/1/5/states-find-you-cant-take-legal-marijuana-money-to-the-bank>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.drugfree.org/join-together/marijuana-related-calls-poison-control-centers-colorado-washington-rise/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://blogs.seattletimes.com/today/2015/01/pot-related-poison-control-calls-up-in-washington-colorado/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.marijuanadebunked.com/>



Between 2006 and 2012, teenage marijuana use in the United States increased dramatically, but it didn't increase dramatically everywhere. Teen use increased five times as much in the states with medical marijuana laws as in the states without these laws. Were it not for states with medical marijuana laws, teen use would barely have increased at all.

6

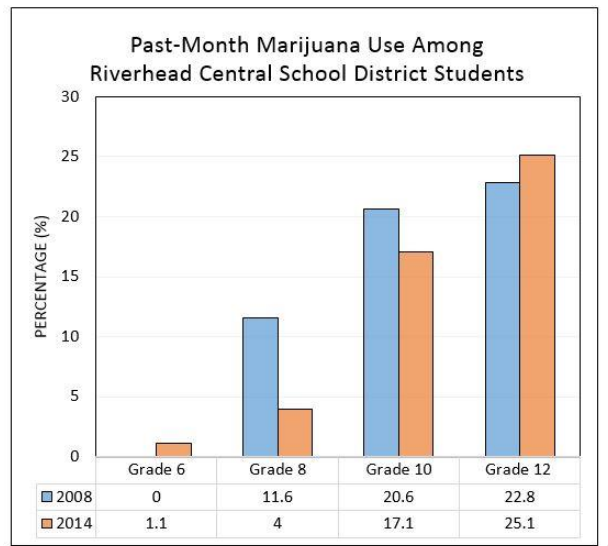
According to Dana Ralph, City Council President in Kent, Wa., there have been several cases of students being caught with medical marijuana that is prescribed to their parents.<sup>7</sup> National and local data show that legalizing drugs normalizes their use. As marijuana becomes legalized and present in our community, teens will believe that it isn't a risky behavior to use marijuana. This causes the rate of marijuana to go up among youth.<sup>8</sup> We have already seen the trend begin among students in Riverhead Central School District. In 2014, one out of every four 12<sup>th</sup> graders in Riverhead High School reported that they have used marijuana in the past 30 days. The number of students who are using marijuana will only go up if students are exposed to a dispensary in our town.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.marijuanadebunked.com/graphs/>

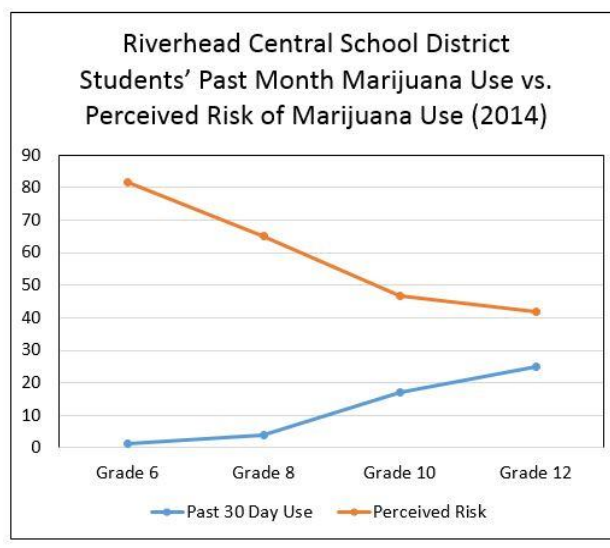
<sup>7</sup> Dana Ralph, City Council President, Kent, Wa., personal communication

<sup>8</sup> <https://ncadd.org/in-the-news/338-marijuana-use-on-the-rise-among-teens>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.bach-harrison.com/BhResources/PnaSurvey.aspx> - please contact Riverhead CAP for RCSD's surveys



9



9

The younger an individual is when they first use marijuana has an association with the use of other drugs, such as cocaine and heroin. Youth that use marijuana are also more likely to become dependent on drugs as adults. It is likely that the availability of medical marijuana will create new consumers in addition to those who are already using marijuana, which may increase the use of harder drugs among community members as well.<sup>10</sup>

Marijuana use has a negative impact on a youth's ability to perform academically. The more a student uses marijuana and other drugs, the lower their average grade is likely to be and the more likely they are to drop out of school.<sup>11</sup> A recent analysis conducted by Lancet found that

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/marijuana-facts-teens/want-to-know-more-some-faqs-about-marijuana>

<sup>11</sup> Johnston, L.D., O'Malley, P.M., Backman, J.G., & Schulenberg, J.E. University of Michigan, 2011. Monitoring the Future Study.

daily use of marijuana by adolescents increase their risk of dropping out of high school by 66%.<sup>12</sup> This may impact the individual's future success in academia and ability to gain employment – which may ultimately impact our community through loss of productivity.

The place in question for a medical marijuana dispensary is on Route 58, a busy road in the heart of Riverhead. The dispensary is less than a half mile by road from Riverhead High School, and even less than that if you cut across the back property of the high school. Building a dispensary on one of our main streets where youth will easily be exposed to it will send a wrong message to our youth that it is acceptable for them to use marijuana.<sup>13</sup>

*“By characterizing the use of illegal drugs as quasi-legal, state-sanctioned, Saturday afternoon fun, legalizers destabilize the societal norm that drug use is dangerous. They undercut the goals of stopping the initiation of drug use to prevent addiction.... Children entering drug abuse treatments routinely report that they heard that ‘pot is medicine’ and, therefore, believed it to be good for them.”* –**Andrea Barthwell, MD, Former Deputy Director, White House Office of National Drug Control Policy**<sup>14</sup>

**Safety:** Marijuana dispensaries may increase crime, including armed robberies and murders, in the surrounding areas. In California, many violent crimes have been committed and found to be connected to marijuana dispensaries. In the past decade, two home occupants were shot in Willits, California in the process of a home-invasion robbery targeting medical marijuana. In Santa Barbara, California, there has also been a series of four armed robberies of a marijuana dispensary. During these crimes, cash and baggies filled with marijuana on display were taken by force and removed from the premises.<sup>15</sup> With the legalization of medical marijuana, we may also see an increase in individuals driving under the influence of marijuana, resulting in marijuana-related car accidents and fatalities.<sup>16</sup> Research shows that marijuana impairs an individual's ability to drive by slowing down their reaction time.<sup>17</sup> These public safety issues may cause hardship on the community in the event of a tragedy, and may pose a problem if additional police resources are not available to address marijuana-related safety.

**Resources:** Many towns do have the resources available to compensate for the unintended consequences of a medical marijuana dispensary in Riverhead. One study conducted by the University Of Pittsburgh Graduate School Of Public Health found that the presence of a dispensary is associated with an increase in healthcare costs. The study, funded by the National

---

<sup>12</sup> Young adult sequelae of adolescent cannabis use: an integrative analysis. September 2014.

<http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366%2814%2970307-4/abstract>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.drugfree.org/join-together/legalizing-marijuana-sends-wrong-message-to-young-people-kerlikowske-says/>

<sup>14</sup> [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2004-02-17/news/0402170048\\_1\\_marinol-medical-marijuana-reform-of-marijuana-laws](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2004-02-17/news/0402170048_1_marinol-medical-marijuana-reform-of-marijuana-laws)

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.procon.org/sourcefiles/CAPCAWhitePaperonMarijuanaDispensaries.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Drug Involvement of Fatally Injured Drivers. U.S. Department of Transportation Report No. DOT HS 811 415. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2010.

<sup>17</sup> DuPont, R. et al. 2010. “Drug Driving Research: A White Paper.” Prepared for the National Institute on Drug Abuse. <http://stopdruggeddriving.org/pdfs/DruggedDrivingAWhitePaper.pdf>

Institutes of Health, found that communities with dispensaries were associated with a 6.8 percent increase in the number of hospitalizations linked to marijuana abuse and dependence.<sup>18</sup> In addition to medical services, there may also be additional police and medical services needed. The law states that no funding will be given for additional police, emergency, or medical services. Tax revenue will go to the state and county level.<sup>19</sup>

### **Municipal Approaches:**

There are several approaches the a municipality can take to regulate dispensaries in order to ensure public safety.

*Bans and moratoriums:* municipalities can place a ban or a moratorium on medical marijuana facilities and the use of medical marijuana within their jurisdiction.

*Land use regulation:* municipalities can create ordinances that authorize and regulate how dispensaries are run within their jurisdiction.

Some issues to consider when creating a regulation surrounding medical marijuana include:

**Location:** Marijuana dispensaries should not be located in a busy area where it will easily be exposed. An increase in exposure of marijuana dispensaries is associated with rising marijuana use among youth. Restriction of marijuana dispensaries in certain locations reduces the presence of marijuana in the community and the normalization of its use. The dispensary must not be located near schools, residential areas, playgrounds, parks, and other places where children and their families visit.

**Advertising:** The presence of marijuana advertising may cause youth to believe that its use is normal, healthy, and fun. A RAND Corporation study found that adolescents who saw medical marijuana advertising were more likely to report using marijuana or report that they planned to use marijuana in the future.<sup>20</sup> No public advertising should be permitted through flyers, billboards, mailings, yard signs, etc.

**Signage:** Although marijuana dispensary are limited to only one external sign in black and white writing, there are also other considerations. External signage should be no greater than 10 sq. feet. There should also be clear signage on the doors that prohibits those without a certification card from entering. Signage that prohibits loitering around the area as well as security patrols around the building and parking lot may help reduce crime-related incidents.

**Costs:** When law enforcement, fire or other emergency response provider must respond to a crime or other disturbance at the facility two or more times within a twelve month period, all

---

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.bizjournals.com/pittsburgh/blog/morning-edition/2015/08/pitt-studymarijuana-dispensaries-related-to-abuse.html>

<sup>19</sup> [https://www.health.ny.gov/regulations/medical\\_marijuana/docs/regulations.pdf](https://www.health.ny.gov/regulations/medical_marijuana/docs/regulations.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.rand.org/news/press/2015/07/06.html>



*Community Coalition for  
Safe and Drug-Free Youth*

responsible parties related to the operations shall be liable for the costs of providing response costs for the second response and all further responses during the 12 month period.