



Revised March, 2012

## Use and Addiction

- **17.4 million** Americans are regular marijuana users (up from 14.4 million in 2007).<sup>1</sup>
- Between 2007 and 2010, the percentage of Americans who use marijuana regularly increased **21%** from 5.8% to 6.9%.<sup>2</sup>
- More than **4 million** Americans (24% of users) meet the criteria for marijuana addiction.<sup>3</sup>
- The percentage of youth (aged 12 to 17) who use marijuana increased from **6.7%** in 2007 to **7.4%** in 2010.<sup>4</sup>
- The highest percentage of past-month marijuana users among youth occurs in states with medical marijuana laws – Washington State ranks **15<sup>th</sup>** nationally for the percentage of users and **44<sup>th</sup>** nationally for youth who perceive that smoking marijuana is harmful.<sup>5</sup>

## Youth

- **9%** of Washington State 8<sup>th</sup> graders, **20%** of 10<sup>th</sup> graders and **26%** of 12<sup>th</sup> graders report current marijuana use.<sup>6</sup>
- **23%** of Washington State students who do not use marijuana received mostly C's, D's and F's on grade reports; **51%** of those who use marijuana received mostly C's, D's and F's.<sup>7</sup>
- **26%** of Washington State students who do not use marijuana report symptoms of depression; **43%** of those who use marijuana report symptoms of depression.<sup>8</sup>
- Youth who initiate marijuana use by age 13 usually do not go to college.<sup>9</sup>
- Marijuana use rates among youth 12 to 17 are higher in states with medical marijuana laws (**8.6%**) than in states without such laws (**6.9%**).<sup>10</sup>
- Marijuana dependence accounted for **62%** of the youth admissions to Washington State treatment programs.<sup>11</sup>

## Health

- Harvard University researchers report that the risk of heart attack is five times higher than usual in the hour after smoking marijuana.<sup>12</sup>
- The National Institute of Health found that a person who smokes five joints per week may be taking in as much tar and cancer-causing chemicals into their lungs as someone who smokes a pack of cigarettes every day.<sup>13</sup>
- Smoking marijuana weakens the immune system and raises the risk of lung infections.<sup>14</sup>
- The National Institute on Drug Abuse found that critical skills related to attention, memory and learning are significantly impaired among marijuana users, even after they had not used the drug for at least 24 hours.<sup>15</sup>
- Marijuana use has been linked with depression and suicidal thoughts in addition to schizophrenia; weekly (or more frequent) marijuana use doubles the risk of developing depression and triples the incidence of suicidal thoughts among youth.<sup>16</sup>
- Researchers at Sweden's Karolinska Institute have identified the potential for marijuana smoking during pregnancy to damage the fetal brain, exerting adverse effects on nerve cells that could potentially impose life-long cognitive and motor deficits.<sup>17</sup>

## Treatment

- The number of persons living in Northwest HIDTA counties who received treatment for marijuana addiction increased **74%** from 1999 to 2010 (6,309 to 10,966).<sup>18</sup>
- The number of persons living in Cowlitz, Kitsap and Spokane counties who received treatment for marijuana addiction increased over **100%** from 1999 to 2010 (1,076 to 2,341).<sup>19</sup>
- The number of persons living in Clark County who received treatment for marijuana addiction increased over **165%** from 1999 to 2010 (264 to 699).<sup>20</sup>
- The number of persons living in Benton County who received treatment for marijuana addiction increased over **200%** from 1999 to 2010 (142 to 451).<sup>21</sup>

- The number of persons living in Franklin County who received treatment for marijuana addiction increased over **250%** from 1999 to 2010 (63 to 228).<sup>22</sup>

## Impaired Driving

- The number of Washington State drivers found to be impaired by marijuana use increased **28%** from **764** in 2008 to **975** in 2010.<sup>23</sup>
- Among impaired Washington State drivers, the percentage found to be under the influence of marijuana increased **13%** from **17.2%** in 2008 to **19.5%** in 2010.<sup>24</sup>
- Drivers who test positive for marijuana or self-report marijuana use are **more than twice** as likely as other drivers to be involved in motor vehicle crashes.<sup>25</sup>

## Washington State Law (RCW 69.51A)

- The law allows a qualifying patient or designated provider to grow medical marijuana. It is not legal to buy or sell it.
- A designated provider can only be a provider for one patient at any one time.
- The law does not allow dispensaries.
- A qualifying patient or designated provider may have a 60-day supply of medical marijuana, which is defined as 24 ounces and 15 plants.
- Qualifying patients can create and participate in collective gardens.
  - No more than ten qualifying patients may participate in a collective garden;
  - A collective garden may contain no more than 15 plants per patient, up to a total of 45 plants;
  - A collective garden may contain no more than 24 ounces of cannabis per patient up to a total of 72 ounces;
  - A collective garden means qualifying patients share responsibility for acquiring a location, equipment, supplies and labor needed to plant, grow and harvest cannabis.

## NWHIDTA Counties

- Benton, Clark, Cowlitz, Franklin, King, Kitsap, Lewis, Pierce, Skagit, Snohomish, Spokane, Thurston, Whatcom, Yakima

This and other information can be found at [www.mfiles.org](http://www.mfiles.org)

<sup>1</sup> SAMHSA, "2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health", September 2011

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> NIDA, "Marijuana", 2010

<sup>4</sup> SAMHSA, "2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health", September 2011

<sup>5</sup> SAMHSA, "National Household Survey on Drug Use and Health" State Estimates on Substance Use, 2006-07

<sup>6</sup> Washington State Healthy Youth Survey, 2010

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> NIDA, "Marijuana Abuse: Age of Initiation, Pleasure of Response Foreshadowing Young Adult Outcomes

<sup>10</sup> *Annals of Epidemiology*, "Adolescent Marijuana Use from 2002 to 2008; Higher in States with Medical Marijuana Laws", 2011

<sup>11</sup> Washington State Treatment Assessment Report Generation Tool (TARGET), November 2011

<sup>12</sup> "Marijuana and Heart Attacks", Washington Post, March 3, 2000

<sup>13</sup> "One cannabis joint as bad as five cigarettes", Reuters, July 31, 2007

<sup>14</sup> NIDA, "Smoking Any Substance Raises Risk of Lung Infections", February 1997

<sup>15</sup> NIDA, "Research Report: Marijuana Abuse", October 2001

<sup>16</sup> "Drug Abuse: Drug Czar, Others Warn Parents that Teen Marijuana Use Can Lead to Depression", Life Science Weekly, May 31, 2005

<sup>17</sup> "How Smoking Marijuana Damages the Fetal Brain", Karolinska Institute, Science Daily, May 29, 2007

<sup>18</sup> Washington State Treatment Assessment Report Generation Tool (TARGET), November 2011

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Washington State Toxicology Laboratory, November 2011

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Epidemiologic Reviews, "Marijuana Use and Motor Vehicle Crashes", October 2011

