

Public Opinion on Marijuana Use in Michigan

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School of Social Work
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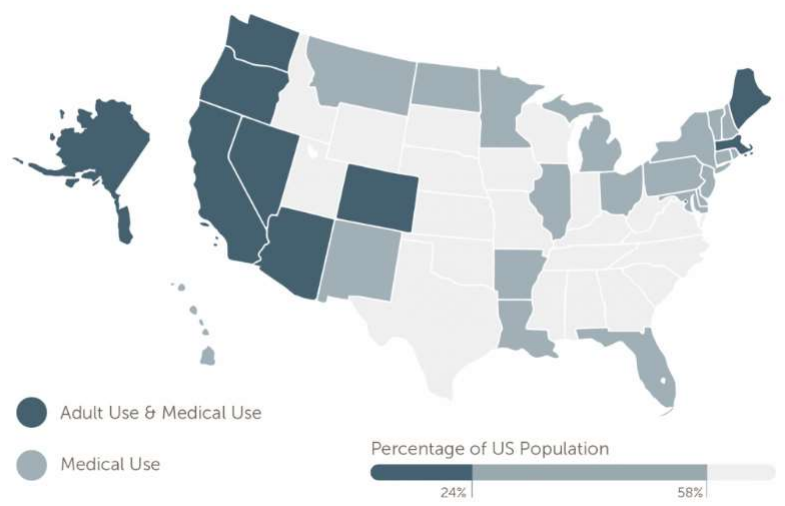
Goals and Overview of Talk

- ▶ Background on marijuana use, recent policy changes, shifts in public opinion, and marijuana use
- ▶ Overview of Michigan Prevention Association's Public Opinion Survey
- ▶ Discuss the implications for treatment and prevention and future research directions

Marijuana Use

- ▶ Marijuana is the world's most commonly used illicit substance
 - ▶ Between 119 and 224 million marijuana users worldwide (UN Office on Drugs and Crime, 2012).
- ▶ Approximately 18.1 million current (past month) marijuana users in the US (SAMHSA, 2012).
- ▶ Among American illicit drug users, roughly two thirds (64.3%) report the use of only marijuana (SAMHSA, 2012)

Cannabis Policy in the U.S.



Medical vs. Recreational Marijuana Use

- ▶ Medical marijuana is typically regulated by public health departments and made available through a small number of licensed physicians and dispensaries (Choo et al., 2014).
- ▶ Legalization of marijuana for recreational use might be different in the extent of availability



Marijuana Use & Adolescents

- ▶ Marijuana is the most commonly used illicit substance among adolescents (Johnston, O'Malley, Bachman, & Schulenberg, 2015).
- ▶ Adolescence is when use is often initiated.
 - ▶ By 12th grade, 44% of U.S. high school students report marijuana use (Johnston, et al., 2015).

Past Year Adolescent Marijuana Use (1975-2015)

- ▶ Peak rates of use in the late 1970's
- ▶ Increase in 1990's and from 2008-2011.



Marijuana & Adolescents

- ▶ Approximately 26% of youth who use marijuana meet DSM-IV criteria for substance use disorder (Wu et al., 2011).
- ▶ Half of individuals who enter treatment for marijuana use are under the age of 25 (Budney et al., 2007).



Adolescent Marijuana Use & Adverse Outcomes

- ▶ Future depression and anxiety disorders ([Rey et al., 2004](#)), fatal automobile crashes ([Asbridge, Hayden and Cartwright, 2008](#)), accidental injuries, chronic bronchitis and respiratory infections ([Hall & Degenhart, 2009](#))
- ▶ Under the influence of marijuana, adolescents may display impaired judgment, contributing to risky behaviors: unprotected sex, driving under the influence, or riding with an impaired driver ([Gruber and Pope, 2002](#)).

Adolescent Marijuana Use & Adverse Outcomes (2)

- ▶ Earlier age of onset for marijuana use is associated with increased risk of developing substance-use problems ([Brook, Brook, Zhang, Cohen, & Whiteman, 2002](#); [Lynskey et al., 2003](#)).
- ▶ Frequent marijuana use among youth associated with impaired cognitive functioning and brain development ([Meier et al., 2012](#); [Schweinsburg, Brown, & Tapert, 2008](#))

Public Opinion

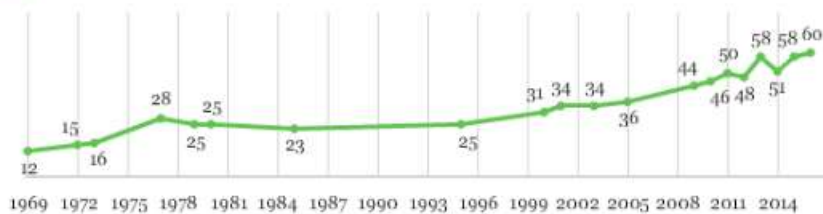
- ▶ Despite these potential consequences, the levels of perceived risk and disapproval of marijuana among adults and adolescents are low and steadily declining (*Gallup*, 2011; Johnston et al., 2015).
- ▶ When *Gallup* (2011) first surveyed adults in the United States regarding marijuana legalization in 1969, only 12% favored it.

Shifts in Public Opinion

Americans' Views on Legalizing Marijuana

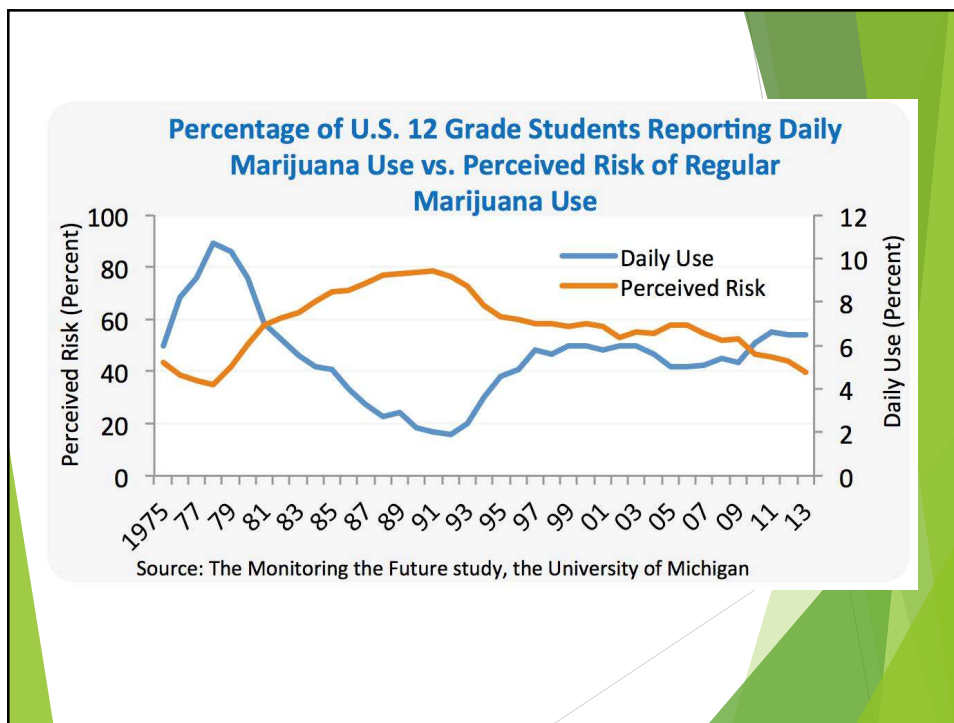
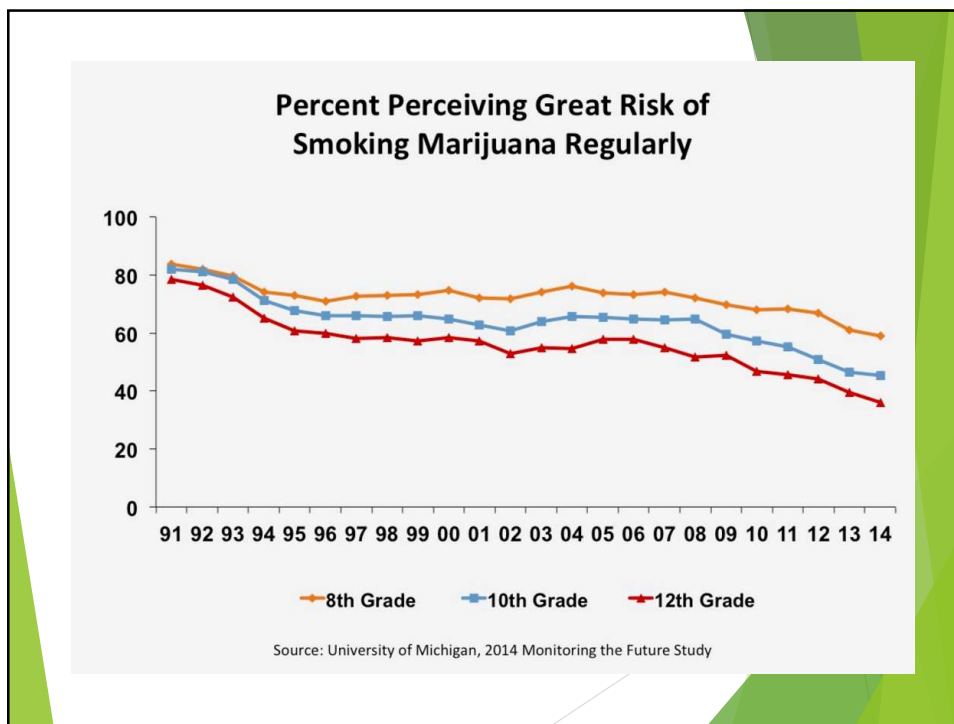
Do you think the use of marijuana should be made legal, or not?

■ % Yes, legal



GALLUP®

- ▶ October 2016: Public support for making marijuana legal reached 60%



Michigan Prevention Association Survey: Methods

- ▶ Web-based survey of Adults in Michigan
- ▶ Recruitment: MPA advertised the study via email, online postings(e.g. Facebook), and meetings
 - ▶ Relied on members/community partners for recruitment
 - ▶ Data collection over 3 week period (August-September 2016)
 - ▶ Yielded N=2,608

Michigan Prevention Association Survey: Measures

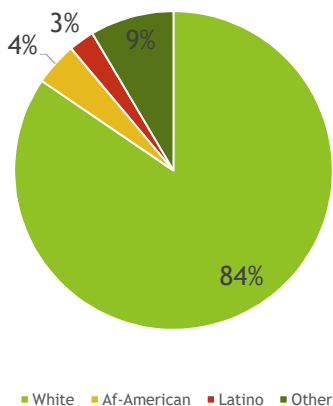
- ▶ Survey developed with input from MPA committee:
 - ▶ Marsialle Arbuckle, Michelle Beeck, Jesse Kauffman, John Kroneck, Keri Marsh, Amy Moore, Susan Papple, Stella Resko, Barry Schmidt, Mike Tobias, Stephanie VanDerKooi.
- ▶ Utilized existing marijuana questions from Gallup, Pew, and General Social Survey
- ▶ Several study-specific items developed for this project.
- ▶ Demographics were from the National Survey of Drug Use and Health (2015)

Characteristics of the Sample

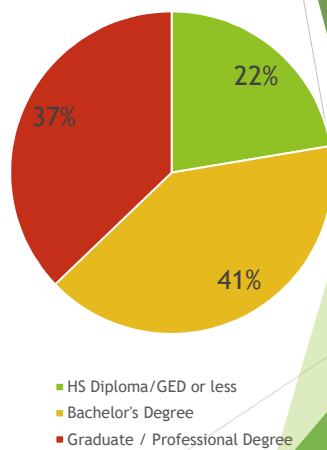
- ▶ N=2,608
- ▶ 68.3% Female
- ▶ 40.8% had children under 18 in their household
- ▶ Ages Range from 18-88
 - ▶ Mean 45.6, S.D. 13.4
- ▶ 65.8% Married or cohabitating

Characteristics of the Sample:

Race



Education

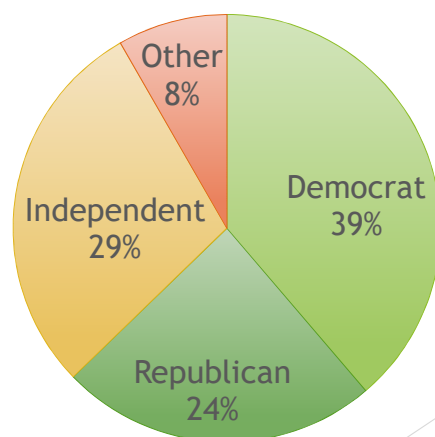


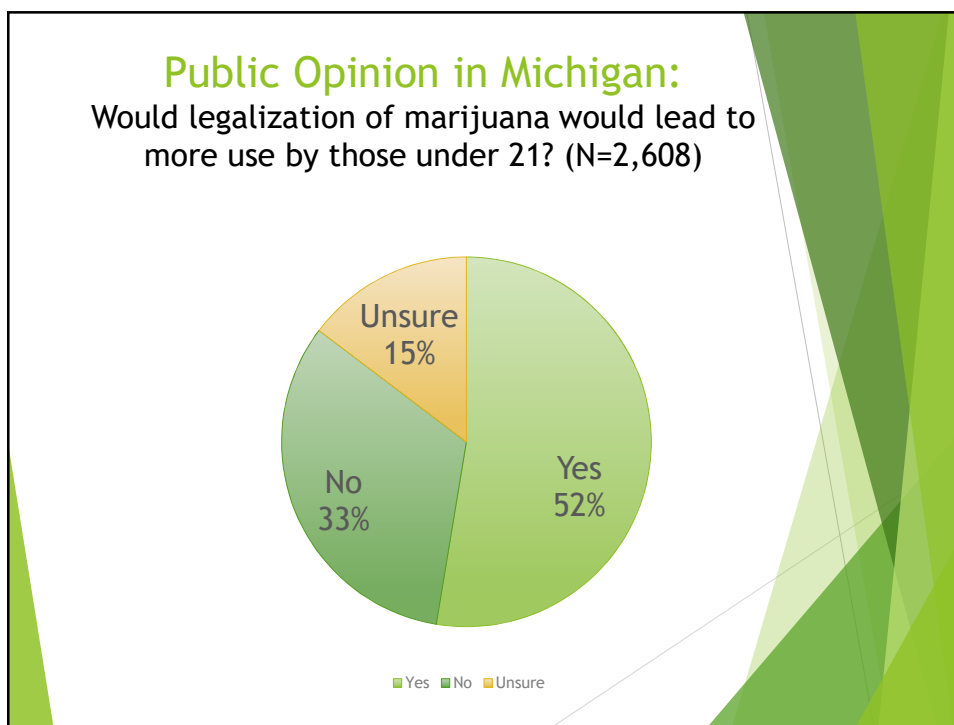
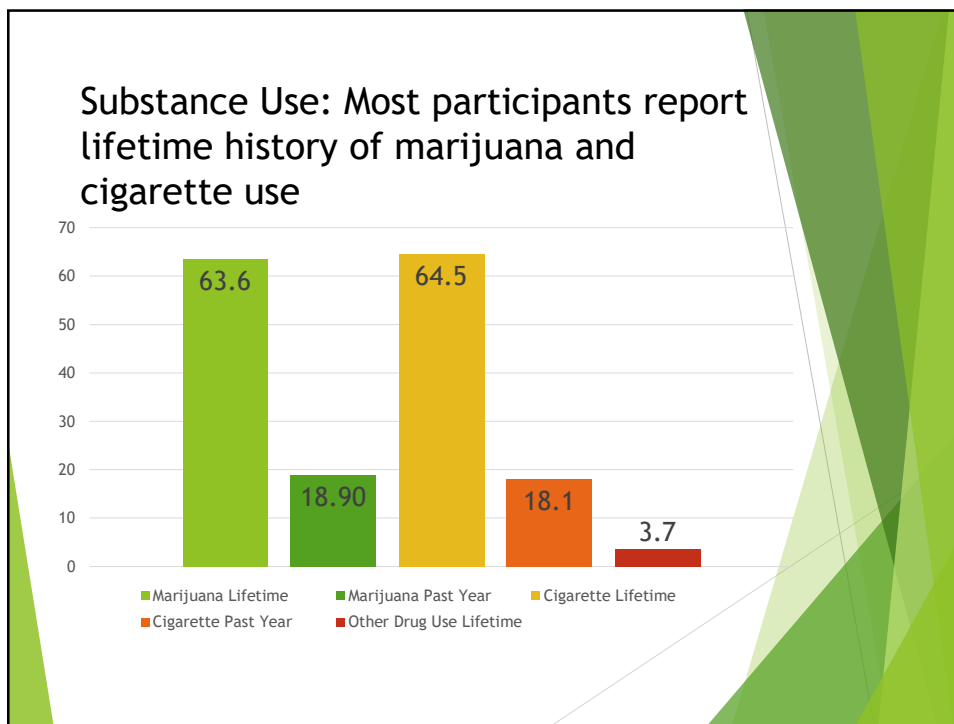
Characteristics of the Sample Employment Status

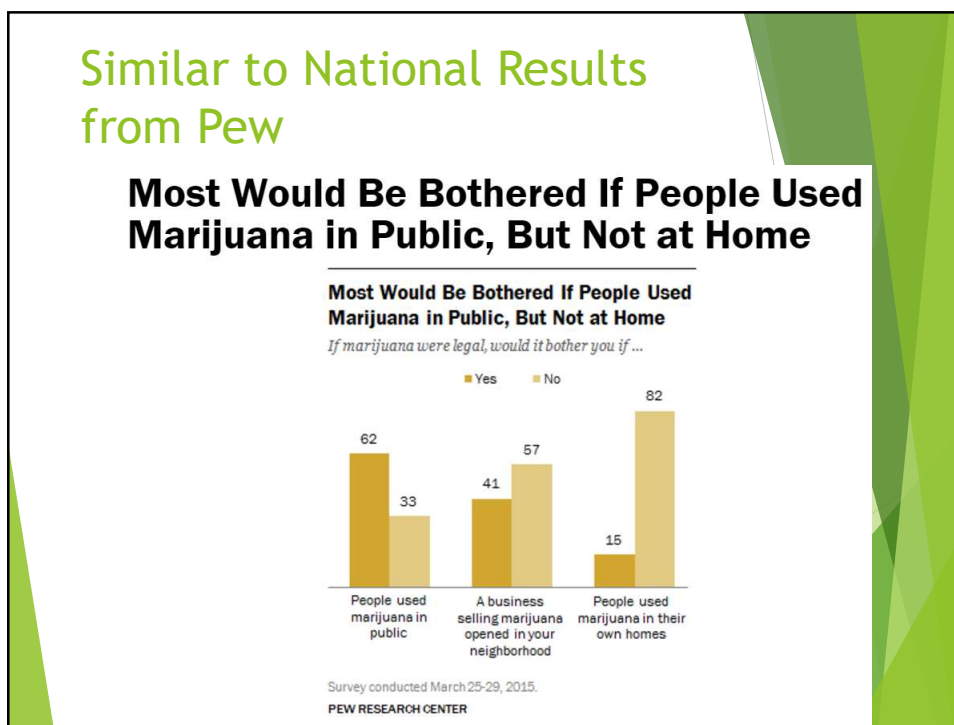
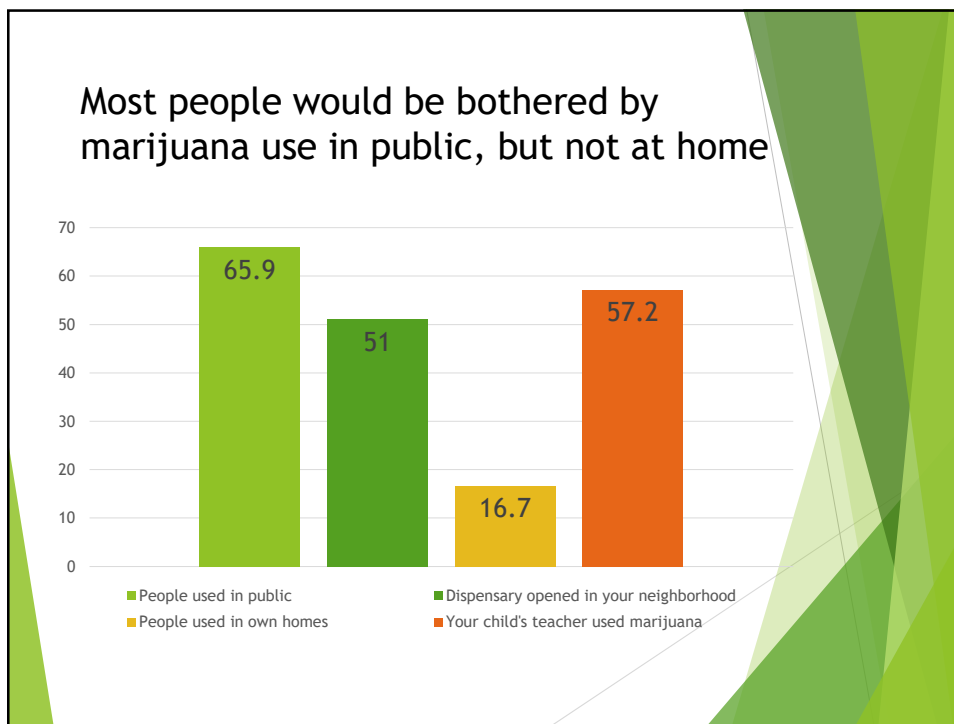
- ▶ Most Participants (75.5%) were Employed Full-time
- ▶ Smaller numbers in other employment groups:
 - ▶ 9.6% Employed Part-time
 - ▶ 7.6% Retired
 - ▶ 7.2% Other (Students, Homemaker/Stay at Home Parent, laid off, unemployed)

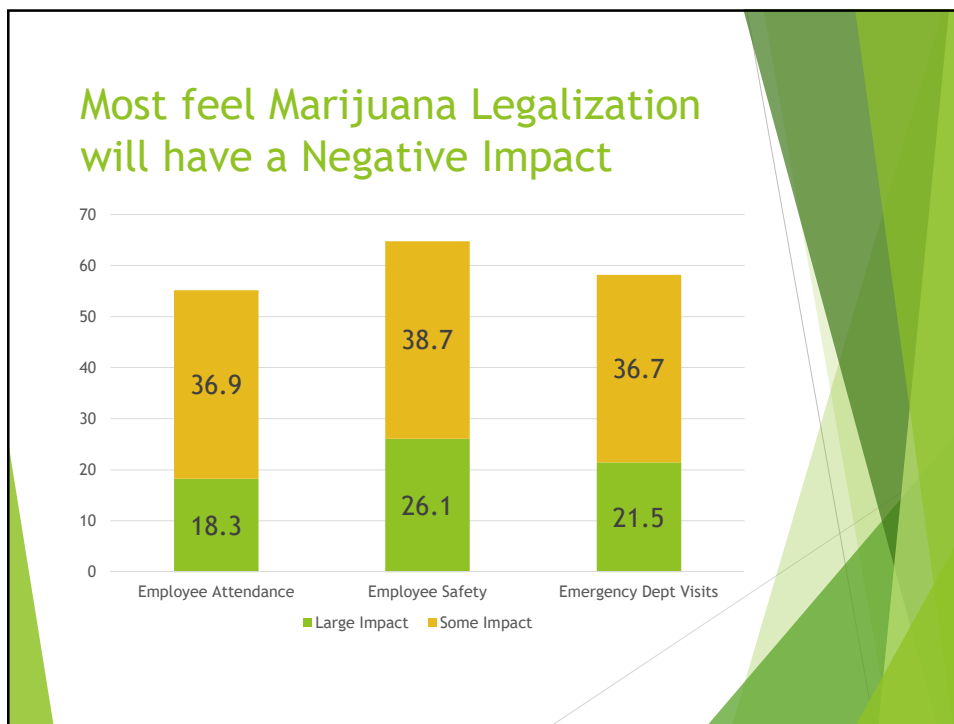
Characteristics of the Sample: Political Party Identification (N=2,608)

Column1







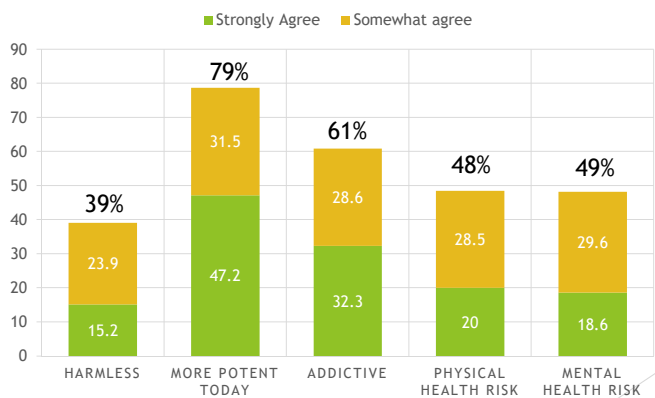


Mixed Opinions about Legalization and Road Safety

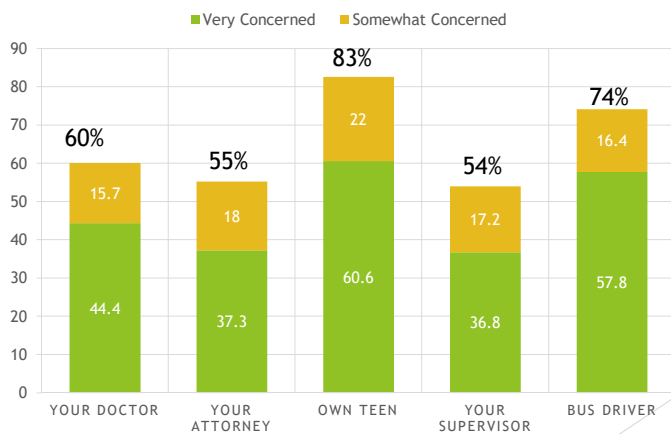
What impact, if any, will marijuana have on road safety?

- 54.6% Less Safe
- 42.0% Not make much difference
- 3.4% More Safe

Most recognize marijuana is more potent, but less than 50% consider it a serious health risk



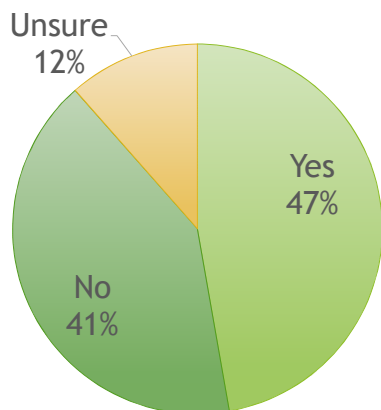
Most have some concerns about use by...



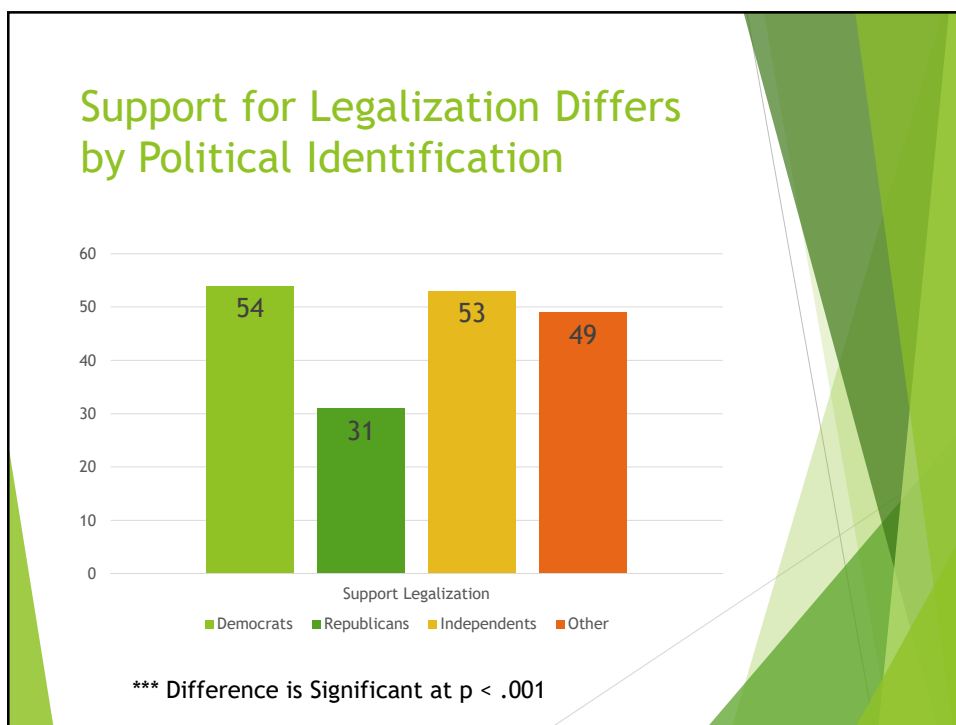
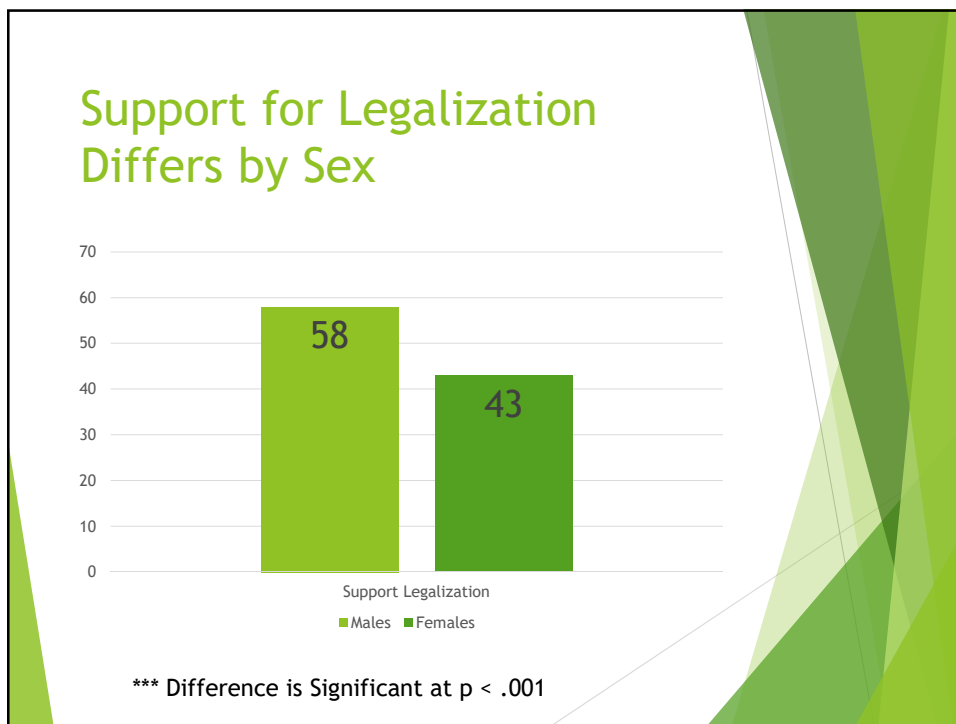
Not in my community...

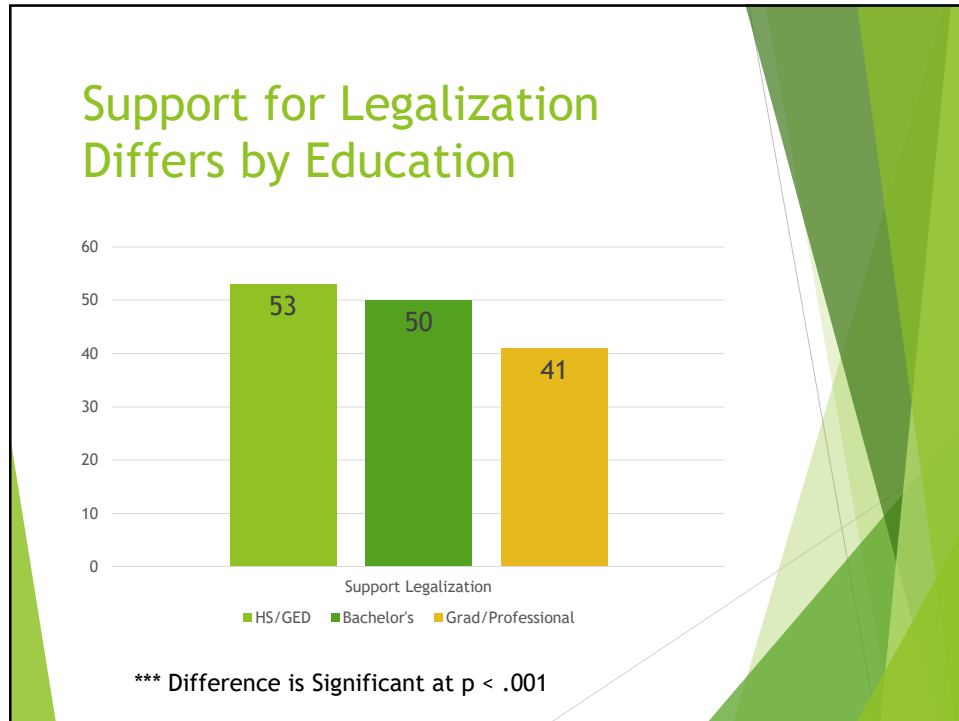
- ▶ Almost half of participants (45.7%) feel marijuana would not be a problem at all in their community with legalization.

Public Opinion in Michigan: Do you think that Marijuana should be made legal for recreational use or not? (N=2,608)



■ Yes ■ No ■ Unsure





- ### Other Differences
- ▶ People with children in their household were **LESS LIKELY** to support legalization (44% vs. 48%)
 - ▶ People who have used marijuana are **MORE LIKELY** to support legalization (61.0% vs. 22.6)
 - ▶ Differences by Race (white, African American or Other) were not significant.

Changing Policies: Concerns about Adolescents

- ▶ Concern within the growing political debate on marijuana is whether legalization of medical and recreational marijuana results in increased access and use among adolescents.
- ▶ Studies have only recently begun to examine the effect of liberalized marijuana policies in the United States.

Changing Policies & the impact on Adolescents: Initial Research

- ▶ Initially, we saw significant differences:
- ▶ In 2013: MTF data showed 40.4 percent of high school seniors in medical marijuana states reported smoking marijuana in the past year compared to 29.7 percent in non-medical marijuana states.
- ▶ Two other studies found higher rates of marijuana use among adolescents in states that had legalized medical marijuana (Cerdá, Wall, Keyes, Galea, & Hasin 2012; Wall et al., 2011).
 - ▶ Cross-sectional data and therefore were unable to determine whether the higher rates preceded or came in the wake of new policies

Changing Policies & the impact on Adolescents

- ▶ In 2014 MTF data, there was no significant difference in the rates of marijuana use among high school seniors in medical marijuana states compared to non-medical marijuana states (34.5 and 30.1 respectively)
- ▶ Most studies conducted to date have generally shown that state-specific legalization of medical marijuana has not led to an increase in recreational marijuana use by adolescents.
 - ▶ Youth Risk Behavior Survey researchers found rates of current (Choo et al., 2014) or lifetime (Lynne-Landsman, Livingston, & Wagenaar, 2013) marijuana use did not significantly increase among adolescents following enactment of medical marijuana legislation.

Changes in Policy: Impact on Intent to Use

- ▶ 10% of high school seniors with no lifetime history of use report that they intend to initiate use if marijuana is legalized for recreational use (Palamar, Ompad, & Petkova, 2014).
- ▶ 18% of high school seniors who report lifetime marijuana use indicate that they intend to use marijuana more often if it is legal (Palamar et al., 2014).

Changes in Policy & How Marijuana is Used

- ▶ **Edible marijuana use is more prevalent among adolescents in states with medical marijuana**
 - ▶ 40% of 12th graders in medical marijuana states who consumed marijuana in the past year reported having consumed it in an edible form
 - ▶ versus 26% in non-medical marijuana states.

Potential Impact on Treatment and Prevention

- ▶ Community norms growing more tolerant of marijuana use and policies shifting toward increased marijuana legalization
 - ▶ Could create challenges for adolescent prevention and treatment (Resko, 2015).
- ▶ Providing services might be more difficult
 - ▶ potentially greater access to marijuana and widespread beliefs that marijuana use is harmless or even beneficial to the user (Hopfer, 2014).
 - ▶ Adolescents might not understand why prevention and treatment professionals advise them to avoid or stop using marijuana.

Potential Impact on Treatment and Prevention

- ▶ Adolescents rarely enter into substance-abuse treatment independently (Godley & White, 2005),
- ▶ Their marijuana prevention and treatment needs must be understood in the context of familial, social, and cultural expectations (Resko, 2014; Resko, 2015).
- ▶ Parents, family members, neighbors, and other adults might view marijuana as a less serious problem and one that does not warrant the need for treatment.

Conclusions

- ▶ As the number of states legalizing marijuana use increases, additional research will be needed to fully assess the effect of legalization on adolescents.
- ▶ It will be important to consider how these policies are implemented and whether specific components of these policies have a greater impact on adolescent marijuana use.
- ▶ Social workers and other substance use prevention and treatment practitioners must continue to educate the public about the potential harms associated with adolescent marijuana use, regardless of legal status.

Acknowledgements

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- ▶ Participants of the study



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