The Truth About Marijuana

10 Fact-Based Reasons Why Legalization in Iowa is a Bad Idea

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10 Fact-Based Reasons Why Legalization in Iowa is a Bad Idea

1. Crude marijuana use is harmful to health, & can be addictive. The AMA is among many health groups opposing legalization.

2. Marijuana is much more potent today, & poses a public safety risk.

3. Easing access & attitudes leads to more drug use by youth.

4. Chronic youth marijuana use can stunt long-term educational potential.

5. Legalization costs to society would exceed tax revenues.
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6. Current marijuana laws to protect Iowans do *not* clog prisons, but *do* enable thousands of drug-using Iowans to get help.

7. Legalization would hinder workplace & economic development efforts & outdoor cultivation can damage the environment.

8. Science-based (safe & effective) medicines from cannabis components exist now, & more are in research & development.

9. “Medical marijuana” states report undesirable effects.

10. The national legalization movement resembles “Big Tobacco.”
Crude marijuana use is harmful to health, & can be addictive. The AMA is among many health groups opposing legalization.

- Can impair or worsen respiratory systems, memory, mood, judgment, heart rate, coordination, problem-solving, anxiety, & psychosis.
  
  2012 NIH, National Institute on Drug Abuse

- A factor in 36% of all U.S. emergency room visits involving illegal drugs.
  
  2011 Substance Abuse & Mental Health Administration

- Marijuana-related ER visits in Iowa more than doubled in 6 years.
  
  2012 Iowa Department of Public Health
Crude marijuana use is harmful to health, & can be addictive. The AMA is among many health groups opposing legalization.

- The American Medical Association “believes that (1) cannabis is a dangerous drug and as such is a public health concern; (2) sale of cannabis should not be legalized.” 2013 AMA

- Nearly 9% of U.S. users become addicted, & users are more likely to use other drugs. 2012 NIH, National Institute on Drug Abuse

- Marijuana is the drug of choice for 26.7% of Iowans in substance abuse treatment, including more than 2,900 Iowa juveniles. 2013 Iowa Department of Public Health
Marijuana is much more potent today, & poses a public safety risk.

THC potency increased from <1% in 1972 to nearly 13% today.  
*2013 University of Mississippi, Revised*

Marijuana sold in “medical marijuana” state dispensaries is the same quality & carries the same health risks as marijuana sold on the street.  
*2012 NIH, National Institute on Drug Abuse*

- After alcohol, THC is the substance most commonly found in the blood of impaired drivers, fatally injured drivers & motor vehicle crash victims. Studies in several localities found 4-14 percent of drivers who sustained injury or died in traffic accidents tested positive for THC.  
  *2013 NIH, National Institute on Drug Abuse*

- Fatal crashes involving marijuana use tripled during the previous decade. Currently, 1 of 9 drivers in fatal crashes tests positive for marijuana. If this trend continues, in 5 or 6 years non-alcohol drugs will overtake alcohol to become the most common substance in impaired driving deaths.  
  *2014 Columbia University School of Public Health*
Marijuana is much more potent today, & poses a public safety risk.

- 12% of U.S. high school seniors drove after smoking marijuana in the last 2 weeks, more than for alcohol (9%).  *2011 Monitoring The Future*

- Cannabis smokers had a 10-fold increase in car crash injury vs. infrequent or nonusers after adjusting for blood alcohol concentration. *2013 American Association for Clinical Chemistry*

- Marijuana was detected in 57% of all Iowa drug impaired driving cases evaluated by drug recognition enforcement experts. *2013 Iowa Governor’s Traffic Safety Bureau*

- As total Colorado traffic fatalities *decreased* 16% over 5 years, marijuana-related fatalities *increased* 114%. *2011 Colorado Department of Transportation*
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Fact-Based Reason #3 Why Legalization in Iowa is a Bad Idea

Easing access & attitudes leads to more drug use by youth.

- Usage rates among youths age 12-17 were higher in “medical marijuana” states (8.6%) vs. other states (6.9%). *2011 Wall, M.*

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**Marijuana & Youth**

- 80% of “medical marijuana” states reported increased usage among youth 12-17 vs. 5 years earlier. *2009-2010 National Survey on Drug Use & Health*
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Fact-Based Reason #3 Why Legalization in Iowa is a Bad Idea

Easing access & attitudes leads to more drug use by youth.

- Residents of states with “medical marijuana” laws had abuse/dependence rates almost twice that of other states.  
  \(2012\) Cerda. M

- Teen past-month heavy marijuana users are more likely than teens who’ve not used in the past year to abuse cocaine (30x), Ecstasy (20x), prescription pain relievers (15x) & over-the-counter medicines (14x).  
  \(2012\) Partnership Attitude Tracking Study

- Marijuana use among teens has drifted higher in recent years, after a decade or more of fairly steady decline. Past month use of marijuana by 12\textsuperscript{th} graders increased from the most recent low of 18.3% in 2006 to 22.7% in 2013, even as high school seniors’ use of alcohol & cigarettes declined.  
  \(2013\) Monitoring the Future
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Fact-Based Reason #4 Why Legalization in Iowa is a Bad Idea

Chronic youth marijuana use can stunt long-term educational potential.

- Marijuana use negatively affects motivation, memory & learning.
  2011 NIH, National Institute on Drug Abuse

- Substance use, especially marijuana, contributed to college students skipping more classes, spending less time studying, earning lower grades, dropping out of college & being unemployed after college.
  2013 University of Maryland School of Public Health
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Fact-Based Reason #4 Why Legalization in Iowa is a Bad Idea

Chronic youth marijuana use can stunt long-term educational potential.

• Persistent marijuana use during adolescence can cause a long-term 8-point drop in IQ, & harm attention span & memory. Virtually every brain function was impaired, & quitting or cutting back did not fully eliminate IQ loss.

2012 Dunedin Study, Duke University
Legalization costs to society would exceed tax revenues.

- Marijuana legalization would not eliminate the black market. Prices would come down, the number of users would go up, & the underground market would adapt.  
  2012 White House Office of National Drug Control Policy

- Taxes on marijuana would never pay for the increased social costs that would result from more users. The U.S. experience with alcohol & tobacco shows that for every dollar gained in taxes, we spent $10 on social costs.  
  2009 Global Bureau of Disease & Injury & Economic Costs Attributable to Alcohol Use
Legalization costs to society would exceed tax revenues.

- “Medical marijuana” is being diverted in Colorado & beyond, to 23 states. Interdiction seizures of Colorado marijuana destined for other states was up 407% vs. 7 years ago.
  
  *2012 Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area & El Paso Intelligence Center*

- Iowa had the 9th highest number of highway interdictions & 7th highest number of parcel interceptions in which Colorado marijuana was seized.

  *2012 El Paso Intelligence Center & U.S. Postal Inspection Service*
Current marijuana laws to protect Iowans do not clog prisons, but do enable thousands of drug-using Iowans to get help.

- About 0.1% of state prisoners nationwide are incarcerated for marijuana possession with no prior sentences.  
  2004 U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics

- In Iowa, 6 (0.17%) state prisoners were incarcerated for 1st-time marijuana possession as the most serious recent offense.  
  2012 Iowa Division of Criminal & Juvenile Justice Planning
Current marijuana laws to protect Iowans do not clog prisons, but do enable thousands of drug-using Iowans to get help.

- Among U.S. prisoners sentenced under state jurisdiction, 18% were sentenced for drug offenses. Of those, 99.8% were sentenced for drug trafficking.  
  2010 U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics

- Over 47% of Iowa substance abuse treatment referrals resulted via the criminal justice system.  
  2012 Iowa Consortium for Substance Abuse Research
Legalization would hinder workplace & economic development efforts & outdoor cultivation can damage the environment.

- Heavy use can impair physical & mental health, cognitive abilities, social life & career status. Worker marijuana use is associated with more absences (+75%), accidents (+55%), workers’ comp claims (+85%), tardiness & turnover.
  
  *2010-2011 NIH, National Institute on Drug Abuse*

- 59.6% of positive Iowa workplace drug tests were for marijuana.
  
  *2008 Iowa Governor’s Office of Drug Control Policy*
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Fact-Based Reason #7 Why Legalization in Iowa is a Bad Idea

Legalization would hinder workplace & economic development efforts & outdoor cultivation can damage the environment.

• Outdoor marijuana cultivation sites, often without a landowner’s knowledge, can result in destruction of natural habitat from diesel spills, pesticide runoff & trash.  
  2010 National Drug Intelligence Center

• Recent eradication efforts in Iowa indicate fewer, but larger, marijuana grows. The 7,262 plants seized last year is the most in 4 years.  
  2013 Iowa Department of Public Safety
Science-based (safe & effective) medicines from cannabis components exist now, & more are in research & development.

- **Marinol** (dronabinol): FDA-approved tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), a prescription pill to treat anorexia & nausea. *1985 U.S. Food & Drug Administration*

- **Cesamet** (nabilone): FDA-approved cannabidiol (CBD), a prescription pill to treat nausea & vomiting. *1985 U.S. Food & Drug Administration*
Science-based (safe & effective) medicines from cannabis *components* exist now, & more are in research & development.

**• Sativex**: Mouth spray with THC & CBD in final FDA clinical trials to treat pain & neuropathic pain. Also a possible future treatment for spasticity problems.  
*2013 U.S. Food & Drug Administration*

**• Epidiolex**: Oral liquid CBD available on a limited basis via FDA Investigational New Drug program to treat children with Dravet Syndrome (pediatric epilepsy).  
*2013 U.S. Food & Drug Administration*
“Medical marijuana” states report undesirable effects.

- Colorado drug-related school suspensions & expulsions increased 41% from 2008-2009 to 2011-2012.
  2012 Colorado Department of Education

- Colorado teens use marijuana at a higher rate (10.72%) vs. the rest of the nation (7.64%).
  2011 National Survey on Drug Use & Health

- 74% of Denver teens in substance abuse treatment used someone else’s “medical marijuana.” 11.6% of Arizona high school users were supplied by a “medical marijuana” user.
  2012 Salomonsen-Sautel, et al. & Arizona Criminal Justice Commission
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Fact-Based Reason #9 Why Legalization in Iowa is a Bad Idea

“Medical marijuana” states report undesirable effects.

• 15 physicians served 49% of Colorado users, & 9 doctors served half of Oregon users. Pain is most cited by users whose average age ranges from 32 (California) to 40 (Arizona) to 41 (Colorado) to 50 (New Mexico).
  

• Marijuana-related exposures for young Colorado children 0-5 rose 200% in 4 years.
  
  2011 Rocky Mountain Poison Center

• States that decriminalized marijuana saw a >30% increase in the call rate to poison centers for children requiring medical intervention from 2005-2011, while non-legal state call rates did not change.
  
  2014 Annals of Emergency Medicine

• Denver “dispensaries” outnumber McDonald’s & Starbucks combined. 105 communities in Colorado & 200 in California imposed local bans on “medical marijuana” centers.
  
  2012 Denver Post & Los Angeles Times
The national legalization movement resembles “Big Tobacco.”

- Millionaires are supporting legalization, & investors are lining up behind them.  
  *2013 Smart Approaches to Marijuana*

- Currently, alcohol & tobacco accessibility & usage are much higher than for marijuana...& so are associated social costs.  
  *2013 Smart Approaches to Marijuana.*
The national legalization movement resembles “Big Tobacco.”

• Once legal, as evidenced in Colorado & Washington State, industry advertising to promote addiction & target kids is inevitable (see alcohol & tobacco, & 1st Amendment). 2013 Smart Approaches to Marijuana
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In Summary

Why Legalization in Iowa is a Bad Idea:

The consensus of available science does **not** support the legalization of crude marijuana for smoking or any other form of consumption, due to its many health & public safety hazards.

Rigorous federal research of promising individual cannabis components should be pursued with vigor to develop *safe, tested & effective science-based* medicines for standardized & measured use with physician & pharmacy oversight to treat valid medical needs, similar to other medicines currently being studied or already authorized by the FDA.