**MARIJUANA ARTICLES**

**Medical Use of Marijuana Doesn’t Increase Youths’ Use, Study Finds** *The New York Times*, June 16, 2015

Marijuana use did not increase among teenagers in the states in which medical marijuana has become legal, researchers reported Monday.

The new analysis is the most comprehensive effort to date to answer a much-debated question: Does decriminalization of marijuana lead more adolescents to begin using it?

The study found that states that had legalized medical use had higher prevailing rates of teenage marijuana use before enacting the laws, compared with states where the drug remains illegal. Those higher levels were unaffected by the changes in the law, the study found.

**A ‘niche business’: Mainstream doctors are wary of prescribing medical marijuana** *Boston.com*, September 23, 2015

Looking for a medical marijuana prescription? Your general practitioner probably won’t help you get it. Most doctors aren’t approved to certify Massachusetts residents as medical-marijuana patients, which is the first step toward receiving legal marijuana from one of the state’s two open dispensaries. In fact, there are only 108 certified doctors in the entire state.

Because of the prevailing stigma among general practitioners, prescribing medical cannabis is a niche business for many clinics. Those who certify patients say it’s a “specialty medicine,” similar to a podiatrist, chiropractor or ear-nose-and-throat doctor. But some experts are concerned that this system encourages a culture of drive-by doctors who prescribe marijuana on an a la carte basis, rather than in the context of a valid doctor-patient relationship.

**The Dark Side of Medical Marijuana** *BuzzFeed*, September 25, 2015

Now that 38 states have legalized some form of cannabis, many people assume the plant’s therapeutic uses are being carefully regulated, dosed, and studied. This is not the case. Marijuana is still illegal everywhere under federal law, which prevents the agencies that would traditionally provide oversight from getting involved. Consumers have no way to know for sure what they are actually buying.

**Detroit council passes restrictions on pot dispensaries** *Detroit Free Press*, December 17, 2015

The Detroit City Council passed an ordinance Thursday that could drastically curtail the city’s booming medical marijuana industry. Many of the city’s more than 150 pot shops are in violation of the new zoning law, which takes effect March 1.

**Marijuana Use Has Doubled Among US Adults** *JAMA*, December 22, 2015

Data from 2 National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism surveys conducted a decade apart shows that the percentage of US adults who use marijuana doubled from 4.1% to 9.5% between 2001-2002 and 2012-2013. During that same time span, the prevalence of adults in the United States who met the criteria for marijuana use disorder increased from 1.5% to 2.9%. The percentage of marijuana users categorized as having a marijuana use disorder, however, decreased from 35.6% of users in 2001-2002 to 30.6% of users in 2012-2013.
This week two marijuana analysis and investment firms released a summary of a report that appeared to confirm that the industry has become a gold rush. National legal sales of cannabis grew to $5.4 billion in 2015, up from $4.6 billion in 2014, according to the firms, the ArcView Group, based in San Francisco, and New Frontier, based in Washington.

Pennsylvania Set to OK Medical Marijuana; Ohio Could Follow The New York Times, April 13, 2016
Pennsylvania is set to become the latest state to legalize medical marijuana as the Legislature sent a bill to the governor on Wednesday after parents of children suffering from debilitating seizures circulated the Capitol urging lawmakers to act.

Now advocates for legal marijuana are looking to New England, hoping this part of the country will open a new front in their efforts to expand legalization nationwide. But this largely liberal region is struggling with the devastating effect of opiate abuse, which is disrupting families, taxing law enforcement agencies and taking lives. And many lawmakers and public officials are balking at the idea of legalizing a banned substance, citing potential social costs.

Lawmakers’ largest concerns are those that have emerged in state after state as the legalization movement has taken off: use and abuse by young people, impaired driving and commercialization.

Although marijuana use among youth poses a risk to health, nationally only 1 in 5 adolescents perceived it as such. According to SAMHSA’s 2014 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, this misperception among youth exists at a time when marijuana concentrates continue to become more potent, which is cause for public concern. This demonstrates the need to educate young people about various forms of marijuana and their related health consequences and harms.

This year has been a symbolically significant year for medical marijuana policy: with the passage of legislation in Pennsylvania and Ohio nearly 175 million Americans -- over half of the population -- now have access to medical marijuana.

These changes are putting pressure on the federal government to update a decades-old marijuana policy that most experts agree is out of step with current scientific understanding of the drug and its risks and benefits.

The DEA is currently in the final stages of reviewing a petition to re-schedule marijuana and has told lawmakers it will have a final decision by July. Advocates of medical marijuana reforms say the petition represents a chance to bring the agency more in line with public opinion, scientific consensus, and the lived experience of millions of medical marijuana patients.

As state after state has legalized marijuana in one way or another, big names in corporate America have stayed away entirely. Marijuana, after all, is still illegal, according to the federal government.

But Microsoft is breaking the corporate taboo on pot this week by announcing a partnership to begin offering software that tracks marijuana plants from “seed to sale,” as the pot industry puts it.
A study published on Monday in the journal JAMA Pediatrics says that in Colorado the rates of marijuana exposure in young children, many of them toddlers, have increased 150 percent since 2014, when recreational marijuana products, like sweets, went on the market legally.

The Obama administration is planning to remove a major roadblock to marijuana research, officials said Wednesday, potentially spurring broad scientific study of a drug that is being used to treat dozens of diseases in states across the nation despite little rigorous evidence of its effectiveness.

Moving to address complaints about New York’s new medical marijuana program, the state’s Health Department is making substantial changes to expand access to the drug, including allowing home delivery, quite likely by the end of September.

In the United States, marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug. In 2013, 7.5% (19.8 million) of the U.S. population aged ≥12 years reported using marijuana during the preceding month. Because of certain state-level policies that have legalized marijuana for medical or recreational use, population-based data on marijuana use and other related indicators are needed to help monitor behavioral health changes in the United States.

How Backyard Pot Farming Is Helping Kids With Autism The Atlantic, September 15, 2016
Parents are going where scientists fear to tread to calm their children’s autism and epilepsy symptoms.

Marijuana and Cannabinoids: A Neuroscience Research Summit Posted October 13, 2016
Marijuana and Cannabinoids: A Neuroscience Research Summit was convened by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and focused on the neurological and psychiatric effects of marijuana, other cannabinoids, and the endocannabinoid system. Both the adverse and the potential therapeutic effects of the cannabinoid system were discussed. The goal of this summit is to ensure evidence-based information is available to inform practice and policy, particularly important at this time given the rapidly shifting landscape regarding the recreational and medicinal use of marijuana.

Opioids Out, Cannabis In - Negotiating the Unknowns in Patient Care for Chronic Pain JAMA, November 1, 2016
With the current nationwide epidemic of opioid abuse, dependence, and fatalities, clinicians are being asked by federal agencies and professional societies to control their prescribing of narcotic medications for pain. Federal guidelines emphasize tapering, discontinuing, and limiting initiation of these drugs except in provision of end-of-life care. Reducing reliance on opioids, however, is a massive task. According to one estimate, more than 650 000 opioid prescriptions are dispensed each day in the United States. Unless the nation develops an increased tolerance to chronic pain, reduction in opioid prescribing leaves a vacuum that will be filled with other therapies.

Monitoring Marijuana Use in the United States - Challenges in an Evolving Environment JAMA, November 1, 2016
In 2014, an estimated 22.2 million Americans aged 12 years or older had used marijuana in the past month. Under federal law, marijuana is considered an illegal Schedule I drug. However, over the last 2 decades, more
than half of the states have allowed limited access to marijuana or its components, Δ9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol, for medical reasons. More recently, 4 states and the District of Columbia have legalized marijuana for recreational purposes. Currently, evidence for the therapeutic benefits of marijuana are limited to treatment and improvements to certain health conditions (eg, chronic pain, spasticity, nausea). Recreational use of marijuana is established by patterns of individual behaviors and lifestyle choices. In either case, use of marijuana or any of its components, especially in younger populations, is associated with an increased risk of certain adverse health effects, such as problems with memory, attention, and learning, that can lead to poor school performance and reduced educational and career attainment, early-onset psychotic symptoms in those at elevated risk, addiction in some users, and altered brain development.

**Californians Legalize Marijuana in Vote That Could Echo Nationally** *New York Times, November 9, 2016*

Voters in California, Massachusetts and Nevada legalized recreational use in what advocates said was a major step toward changing the country’s attitude toward the drug.