



# THE CONNECTION

IOWA GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL POLICY

ISSUE 5, JANUARY 21, 2014—MARIJUANA FACTS—PART 2

## WELCOME FROM DIRECTOR LUKAN

The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy states “the Obama administration steadfastly opposes legalization of marijuana and other drugs because legalization would increase the availability and use of illicit drugs, and pose significant health and safety risks to all Americans, particularly young people.”

However, our youth are getting mixed messages about marijuana from some policy makers and media figures. Some say marijuana use is safe and acceptable.

As several states have voted to legalize use of the drug, attitudes about marijuana are changing. Youth today don't see the drug as harmful as they used to. Yet, we know that marijuana has a disastrous effect on our youth.

In Iowa, nearly 2,900 youth went to drug treatment for marijuana addiction and abuse last year.

The consensus of available scientific research does not support a lessening of current Iowa marijuana controls.

Increasing access to, and sending mixed messages about, marijuana would put more Iowa youth at risk and lead to more addiction and other drug-related problems.

The FDA, which must approve every prescription medicine in the U.S., has not approved the use of marijuana as medicine, saying “there is currently sound evidence that smoked marijuana is harmful.”

What science does support, and what the FDA has ap-

proved, are two prescription pill products containing safe and effective isolated components of the cannabis plant. A similarly synthesized mouth spray is in the works, and an oral liquid is under study.

ODCP supports additional research into the cannabis plant's many components, but opposes marijuana legalization in its raw form because of the negative health, safety and economic effects it would have on Iowans.

Sincerely,

Steven F. Lukan

## POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Welcome from Director Lukan*
- *Marijuana and Health*
- *Marijuana Facts*
- *Marijuana and Substance Abuse Treatment in Iowa*

## HELPFUL LINKS:

- *Iowa Substance Abuse Information Center*  
[www.drugfreeinfo.org](http://www.drugfreeinfo.org)
- *Iowa Medicine TLC*  
[www.iowamedicinetlc.org](http://www.iowamedicinetlc.org)
- *Office of Drug Control Policy*  
[www.iowa.gov/odcp](http://www.iowa.gov/odcp)
- *Partnership @ DrugFreeIowa.org*  
[www.drugfreeiowa.org](http://www.drugfreeiowa.org)
- *Iowa Poison Control Center*  
[www.iowapoison.org](http://www.iowapoison.org)

## MARIJUANA, HEALTH & OPPORTUNITY

Research finds dopamine levels in a part of the brain called the striatum were lower in people who smoke cannabis & in those who began taking the drug at a younger age. Researchers suggest this finding could explain why some cannabis users appear to lack motivation to work or pursue their normal interests. (1)

Persistent marijuana use during adolescence can cause a long-term 8-point drop in IQ. Virtually every brain function is

impaired: memory, processing speed, executive functions, verbal skills, attention span, etc. Quitting or cutting back does not fully eliminate IQ loss. (2)

Marijuana use also contributes to college students skipping more classes, spending less time studying, earning lower grades, dropping out of college, and being unemployed after college. (3)



Sources: (1) 2013 Imperial College London, UCL & Kings College London, *Biological Psychiatry Journal*; (2) 2012 National Academy of Sciences, *Dunedin Study*; (3) 2013 *Journal of Studies on Alcohol & Drugs*, Univ of Maryland

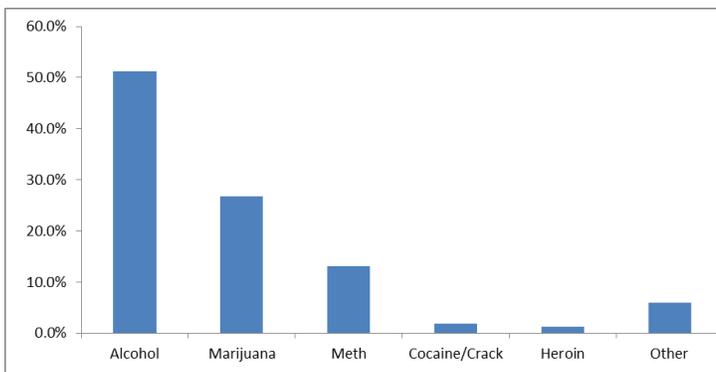
## MARIJUANA FACTS



- **Marijuana was involved in 932 Iowa emergency department visits in 2012.** That is more than double the number of visits in 2006. 2012 IA Dept of Public Health
- **Marijuana was involved in 36% of all US emergency department visits involving illegal drugs.** The rate of ED visits involving marijuana is up 52% since 2004 . 2011 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration—Drug Abuse Warning Network
- **Marijuana is far more potent than it was in the 1970's.** In 1972 the average THC potency was less than 1%. Today it is over 14%. 2013 Univ. of Mississippi Marijuana Project
- **Employee marijuana use is associated with more absences, tardiness, workers' comp claims, and turnover.** Workers testing positive for marijuana had 55% more accidents, 85% more injuries, and 75% more absenteeism. 2010-2011 National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health (NIH), Research Report Series.
- **Marijuana is addictive.** About 9% of users become addicted to marijuana. 2012 National Institute on Drug Abuse, NIH Drug Facts
- **Youth marijuana use exceeds cigarette smoking.** The rate of past month marijuana use by America's 8th, 10th, and 12th graders was higher than cigarette smoking in all three grades. 2013 Monitoring the Future Survey
- **Persistent marijuana use during adolescence can cause a long-term 8-point drop in IQ.** 2012 National Academy of Sciences, Dunedin Study

## MARIJUANA AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT IN IOWA

**Primary Substance of Abuse by All Clients Entering Treatment**



- **26.7% of all Iowans entering substance abuse treatment were due primarily to marijuana use,** the highest level in 20 years. 2013 IA Dept of Public Health
- **69.3% of Iowa youth entering treatment were for a primary substance of marijuana.** 2013 IA Dept of Public Health



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