



University
of Victoria

CANNABIS LEGALIZATION AND YOUTH: DEVELOPING CLEAR MESSAGES IN AN EVOLVING POLICY CLIMATE

LESSONS LEARNED



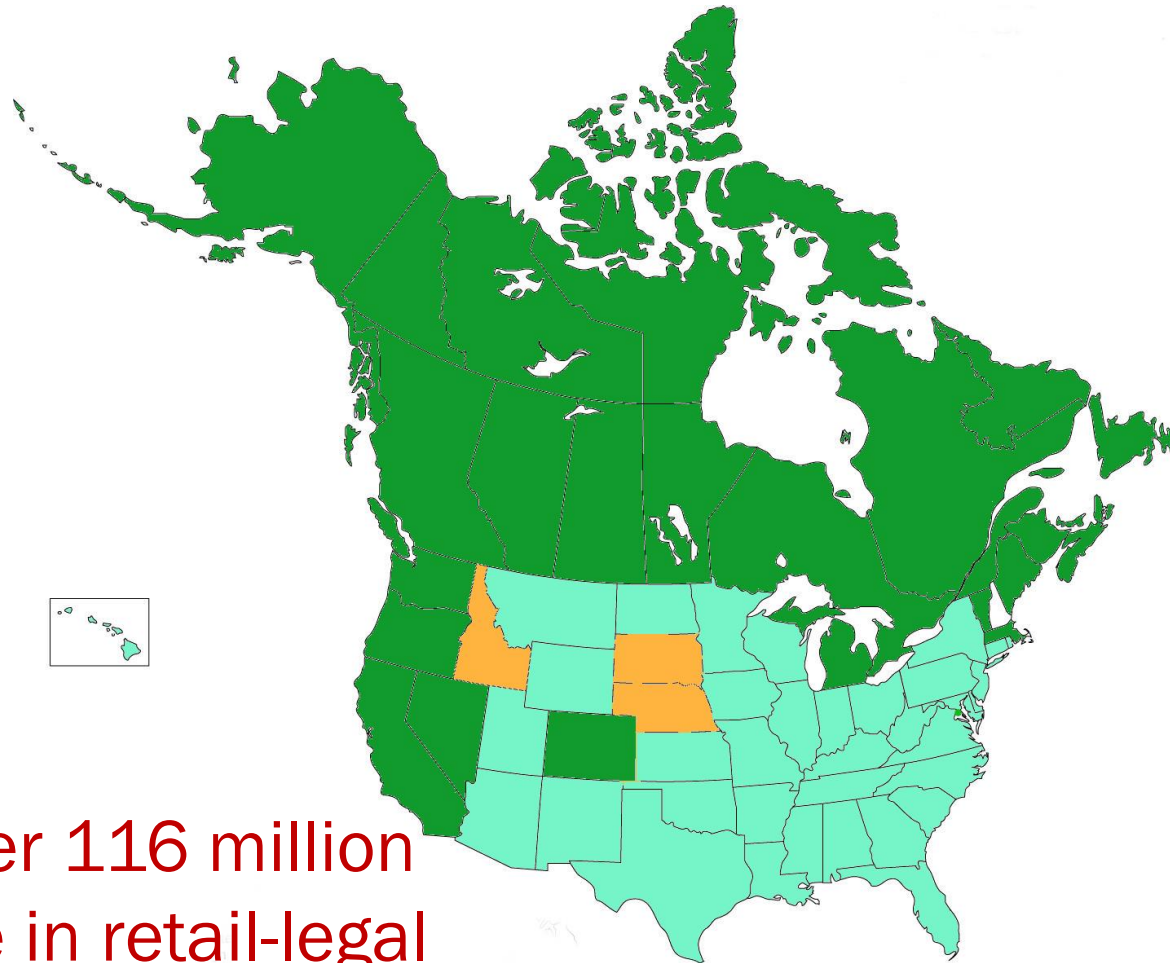
University
of Colorado
Boulder

Boulder Colorado, 16 November 2018



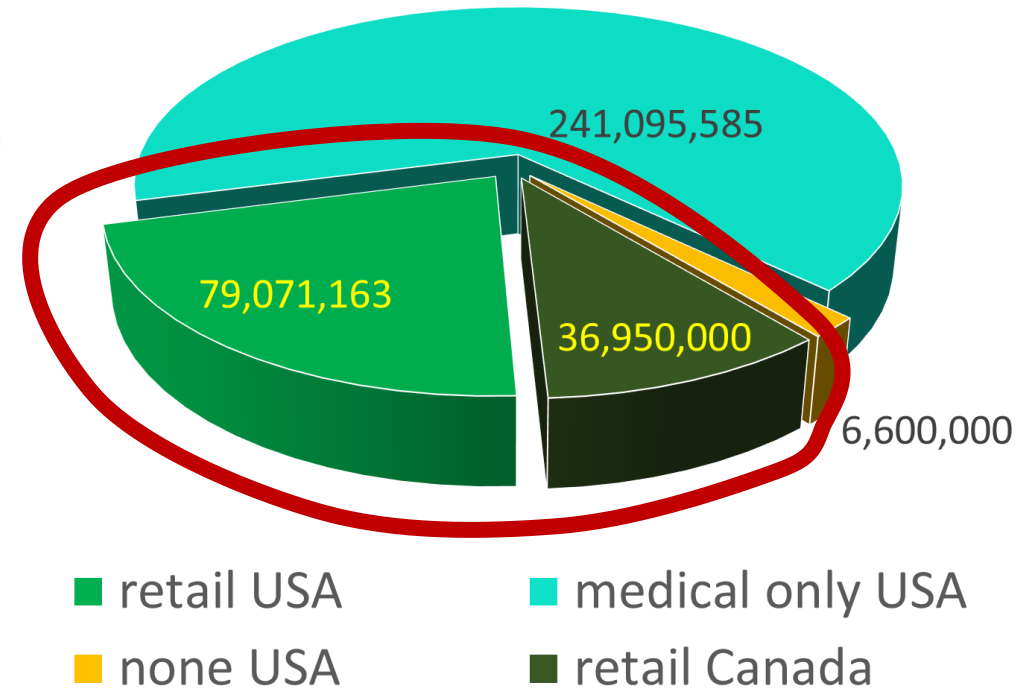
CIHR IRSC
Canadian Institutes of Health Research
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Map of Cannabis Laws – 2018 – Retail + Medical



Over 116 million
live in retail-legal
States or Provinces.

Over 357 million people live in
Canada or the US where either
medical or retail cannabis is legal.



1. Lessons learned: Cannabis and Youth Consequences Research Panel

Heterogeneous patterns of use span adolescence and young adulthood (chronic, increasing, decreasing or adolescent limited, abstainers and occasional users)

Early onset chronic or frequent use are high risk patterns of use

Cannabis risks for changes in brain structure is not established and more research on long-term changes is needed.

Cannabis is addictive and 9 to 17% of young adults experience symptoms of addiction

Delaying onset and limiting use in young people is a prevention strategy that needs assessment.

Consequences of legalization may not be seen in change in numbers of users but may be evident in the rates of increase in heavier use or increase in amounts used by users

2. Lessons learned: Cannabis and Youth Policy Panel

The effects of legalization mechanisms should be studied, commercialization is not the only choice (See Caulkins, Kilmer, Kleiman, *Marijuana Legalization: What Everyone Needs to Know (2nd Edition)*, 2016)

Need for studies on effects of differing pricing choices

Who benefits from sales needs to be balanced with public health costs

Signage and advertising restrictions promoting products to youth are important.

Signage and advertising restrictions on unproven claims for medical use are important

Decisions about how to permit both smoke free environments and cannabis use clubs need debate

Education materials for youth and young adults and their parents are needed plus how best to disseminate information (social media, radio, etc. needs research)

Need more focus on identifying and help seeking for problematic use (chronic and increasing)

2. Lessons learned: Cannabis and Youth Policy Panel (continued)

An over all Legislative Framework needs to coordinate Education, Prevention, Protection, and Monitoring

Funding partnerships and collaboration channels among sectors is needed

Enforcement of cannabis use in underage youth who use cannabis has been ignored (focus has been on driving)

Cannabis is usually combined with alcohol and is only rarely used alone in adolescence

Disproportionate effects; on males, youth who are vulnerable to addictions, these health inequities need to be monitored and addressed

Resources are available –Cannabis prevention toolkit See website for a list compiled for the conference

3. Lesson learned Cannabis and Youth: Interventions

There are many populations who can be targets for prevention beyond individual users (e.g. parents, peers, advertisers, producers)

Many other targets like government and industry exist, There is a need for strong regulation from the start needed + expect push back

Motivational interviewing a good starting place – but follow up services are needed for many youth.

Messages that marijuana is safe for pain, sleep, depression and a host of medical problems needed to be countered.

Adolescents and young adults are the highest users of Cannabis of any age groups in Canada and the US. Interventions that help them to self-identify problem use are being tested and developed (E-Check Up, Riggs & Peer Network Counselling, Mason, 2015)

See resources

4. Lessons Learned Cannabis and Youth: Community Responses

Partnerships among key youth servicing agencies (educators, justice, not for profits, community leaders) are possible and needed! Strong collaborative groups that can debate and address Youth and Cannabis concerns on an ongoing basis have emerged in Colorado and Washington State

Success may be enhanced by local efforts ; however, these need to be funded.

INFRASTRUCTURE and capacity building funding is needed to enable prevention – ad hoc or one size fits all not likely to be adopted

Communities need a voice to set priorities (also need resources and support).

Community members cannot just be volunteers who are expected to work for free

Sustainable funding is needed for sustainable prevention. Every year a new generation is born and one time funding will not address the next wave of users.

Youth voices are needed to ensure solutions are practical, relevant, and age and gender sensitive

Indigenous voices need to be supported to make changes for their urban and rural youth.