

Initiative 502 and Cannabis-Related Public Health and Safety Outcomes: Third Required Report

In November 2012, Washington State voters passed Initiative 502 (I-502), which legalized limited possession, private use, and commercial sales of cannabis for adults. The law also directed WSIPP to produce a series of reports over a 20-year period to assess the long-term impacts of I-502.

Background

In this report, we examine how non-medical cannabis (NMC) legalization and NMC retail sales relate to public health and safety outcomes. In 2019, about 17% of legal-aged adults in WA reported monthly cannabis use.

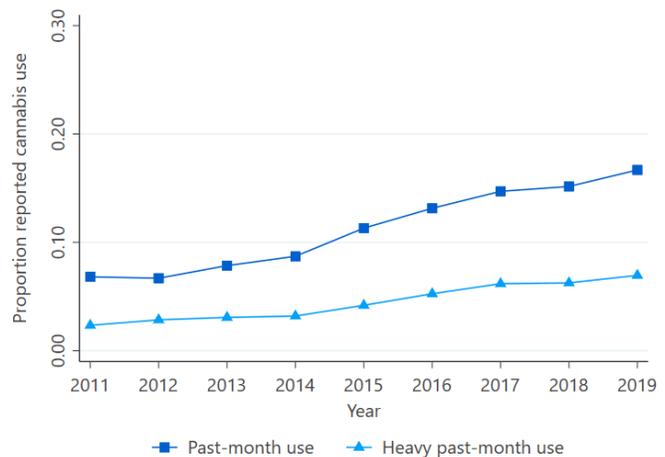
Findings

- Cannabis possession conviction rates in Washington dropped dramatically after I-502 went into effect.
- There were no significant changes in overall reported cannabis use in WA after I-502 went into effect *relative to comparable states*.
- Within WA, closer local proximity to a retailer is related to a greater probability of cannabis use among legal-aged adults (ages 21 and older).
- Among legal-aged adults, closer local proximity also predicts:
 - A greater probability of diagnosed cannabis, alcohol, and opioid use disorder.
 - An increased number of drivers involved in fatal traffic collisions.

Limitations

- More information about the prices, potency, and types of products purchased at retailers is required to better understand the impact of NMC retail sales.
- Other components of I-502 that we cannot account for may also impact relevant outcomes.

Proportion in WA Reporting Past-Month Cannabis Use, Ages 21 and Older



Note:
Data come from Washington State Behavioral Risk and Surveillance System.

Assignment Details

Assigned by Initiative 502 in 2012
Full report available on [WSIPP's website](#)

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