

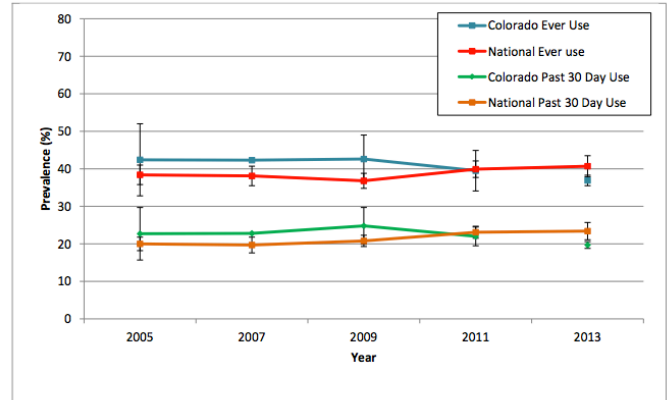
## TEEN USE OF MARIJUANA IN COLORADO

Revision Date: 3/3/2016

### Colorado Teen Marijuana Statistics

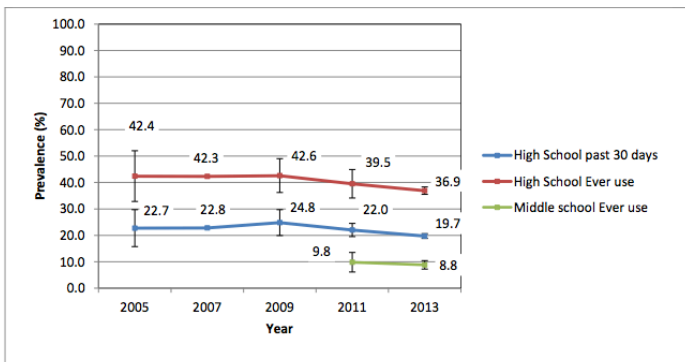
The Healthy Kids Colorado Survey, a collaboration of multiple Colorado state agencies focusing on public health, collects health information every odd calendar year from Colorado public school students. Survey results from 2013, the most recent year provided, indicate that **Colorado students are less likely than average to report past month marijuana use (20% vs. 23%)**. In addition, survey results found no significant change in lifetime or past-month marijuana use from 2005-2013 (Figure 1).<sup>1</sup> This appears to indicate that **Colorado teen marijuana use has not increased with the emergence of a regulated marijuana industry**.

Figure 1. Marijuana Use among High School Students – U.S. and Colorado, 2005-2013



\*Data source: Youth Risk Behavioral Survey prevalence estimates.  
 \*\* Data source: Healthy Kids Colorado Survey prevalence estimates.  
 \*\*\*The 2007 estimates are unweighted and therefore no confidence intervals are calculated.

Figure 2. Marijuana Use among Students in Colorado 2005-2013



\*Middle School current use only 2013. The 2007 estimates are unweighted and therefore no confidence intervals are available. Data source: YRBS data 2005 to 2009, HCKS data 2011, 2013

### Declining Middle and High School Marijuana Use

The Healthy Kids Colorado Survey and CDC-sponsored Youth Risk Behavioral Surveillance Survey indicate that middle school marijuana use as well as past-month and lifetime marijuana use by Colorado high school students has declined since 2009. Past month marijuana use in Colorado high schools dropped over 20% in four years from 24.8% in 2009 to 19.7% in 2013 (Figure 2).<sup>1</sup> **This drop in frequent teenage marijuana use coincides with the rise of Colorado’s regulated medical marijuana market.**

### Increased Adult Marijuana Use Has Not Affected Youth Use or Perceptions of Harm

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), provides national and state-level statistics on drug use. NSDUH data show that reported past-month marijuana use by Coloradoan adults 18 and older has increased from 10.40% in 2011/2012<sup>2</sup> to 15.17% in 2013/2014,<sup>3</sup> however surveys often suffer from substantial underreporting of illicit behavior<sup>4</sup> so this upturn could reflect greater willingness to honestly report marijuana use post-legalization. Either way, data from 2010 to 2014 show no statistically significant change in past-month marijuana use or perceived harm associated with smoking marijuana monthly among youth aged 12-17<sup>5</sup>. **These findings suggest that increased adult marijuana consumption does not necessarily result in an increase in marijuana use among youth nor affect teen perceptions of harm associated with regular use.**

<sup>1</sup> Anderson, Amy., Calanan, Renee., Gruber, Kelli., Tolliver, Ricky. “Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (HKCS),” *Retail Marijuana Public Health Advisory Committee*. January 12, 2015. <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/monitoring-trends-marijuana-use>

<sup>2</sup> “National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2011, 2012, and 2013,” SAMHSA, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUHStateEst2012-2013-p1/ChangeTabs/NSDUHsaeShortTermCHG2013.htm>

<sup>3</sup> 2013-2014 NSDUH State-Specific Tables: Colorado <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/1/1/NSDUHsaeColorado2014.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Timothy P. Johnson, “Sources of Error in Substance Use Prevalence Surveys,” *International Scholarly Research Notices*, vol. 2014, Article ID 923290, 21 pages, 2014. doi:10.1155/2014/923290

<sup>5</sup> “State Estimates of Adolescent Marijuana Use and Perceptions of Risk of Harm from Marijuana Use: 2013 and 2014” [http://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/report\\_2121/ShortReport-2121.html](http://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/report_2121/ShortReport-2121.html)