SUBSTANCE USE TRENDS & HEALTH OUTCOMES

Colorado Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force
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Indicators tracked for the Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention: Misuse and Overdose Deaths
3.7% of Coloradans age 12 or older **misused** prescription pain relievers in the past year ...

or about 189,000 Coloradans in this age group

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**Colorado is still in the top tier of states.**


Substate maps:
Age-adjusted drug overdose death rates involving specific substances: CO residents, 2010-2021

Source: Vital Statistics Program, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
Fatal Overdose Counts for All Drugs and Fentanyl, Colorado residents, 2010-2021

Source: Vital Statistics Program, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
2021 Data Key Points

Opioids

• The age-adjusted rate of prescription opioid overdose deaths, including fentanyl, increased to 19.7 deaths per 100,000 persons in 2021, from 13.6 deaths in 2020.

• However, when excluding any mention of fentanyl on the death certificate, the prescription opioid overdose death rate was only 4.7 deaths per 100,000 persons in 2021 (from 4.2 deaths in 2020).

• Compared to 2020, the fentanyl death rate in 2021 nearly doubled in 1 year.

• Heroin death rate is stable from 2016-2021.

Other drugs

• Fentanyl was combined with other drugs, such as cocaine and psychostimulants.

• In 2021, the age-adjusted rate of psychostimulant overdoses was 12.5 deaths per 100,000 persons, an increase from 8.9 deaths in 2019.

• The age-adjusted rate of cocaine overdoses was 4.6 deaths per 100,000 persons, compared to 3.6 death per 100,000 persons in 2020.
Where to access data?

- CDPHE Drug Overdose dashboard
- Consortium Opioid Dashboard
- Health Watch publications
- Open Data Portal
- SEOW page of data resources & dashboards
- SEOW data publications
Updates in Excessive Alcohol Use
Adult Alcohol Use in Colorado (2011-2021)

Current drinking = any alcohol use in past 30 days
Heavy drinking = 8+ drinks for women or 15+ drinks for men per week
Binge drinking = 4+ (women) or 5+ (men) drinks on one occasion

NOTE: These groups are not mutually exclusive.
Binge Drinking Across the Lifespan in Colorado

Percent of people who report past 30 day binge drinking

2021 Prevalence (%)

- High School: 14.2%
- 18-24 yrs: 24.4%
- 25-34 yrs: 30.5%
- 35-44 yrs: 24.6%
- 45-54 yrs: 18.8%
- 55-64 yrs: 12.2%
- 65+ yrs: 3.8%
- Colorado (18+): 18.7%

Created by CDPHE Alcohol Epidemiology
Source: BRFSS 2021 & HKCS, 2021
The majority of hospitalizations or ED visits that included an alcohol-related diagnosis were for either alcohol abuse or alcohol dependence.

Very few visits included a code for BAC measurement.

Alcohol involvement is likely under-reported in both the hospital and ED setting since it is typically a secondary factor. These numbers reflect only visits where a dx was given for one or more 100% alcohol attributable conditions.
Recent national findings on alcohol and other substances

- Binge drinking is associated with use of other substances as well as concurrent prescription drug misuse
  - 4 times greater odds of substance use among people who binge drink compared to non-binge drinkers
  - people who binge drink were 2 times as likely to report concurrent prescription drug misuse
- Using alcohol at the same time as other substances is known to increase the risk of overdose or injury

SUMMARY: ALCOHOL

- Alcohol is still the most prevalently used substance in Colorado.

- Binge drinking is not just a youth or young adult issue, but younger people tend to consume more alcohol when they do binge drink.

- Alcohol screening in hospital settings could provide a more complete picture of alcohol-related harms.

Created by CDPHE, Alcohol Epidemiology
Sources: Colorado HKCS, 2021; Colorado BRFSS, 2021; Barbosa, C., Cowell, A., Dowd, W. How Has Drinking Behavior Changed During the COVID-19 Pandemic? Results from a Nationally Representative survey. RTI International, July 2020
Updates in Monitoring Marijuana in Colorado

Presenter: DeLayna Goulding
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
Youth Marijuana Use, Colorado 2021

- **13.3%**
  - High School Students
  - Used marijuana 1+ times past 30 days

- **3.0%**
  - Middle School Students
  - Used marijuana 1+ times past 30 days

- **12.5%**
  - High School Students
  - Rode 1+ times with driver who was using marijuana past 30 days

- **5.5%**
  - High School Students that Drove
  - Drove 1+ times using marijuana past 30 days

Past 30 Day Substance Use among High School Students, Colorado 2013 to 2021

- **Marijuana**
- **Cigarettes**
- **Alcohol**
- **Vapor Products (Tobacco)**

Figure Notes:
Significant decrease (*) or increase (†) compared to previous year determined by non-overlapping 95% Confidence Intervals (bars on line).
Denominator includes all respondents except those with missing responses.

Produced by: Marijuana Health Monitoring Program
Data Sources: Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (HKCS), 2021
Method of Marijuana Use, 2021
Among the 13.3% of high school students that used marijuana in the past 30 days:

- 79.5% Smoked marijuana at least one time in the past 30 days
- 49.2% Dabbed marijuana at least one time in the past 30 days
- 39.1% Vaporized marijuana at least one time in the past 30 days
- 36.6% Ate marijuana at least one time in the past 30 days
- 10.3% Used marijuana some other way at least one time in the past 30 days

59.2% used THC concentrates, hash oil, or wax use
Adult Marijuana Use, Colorado 2021

19.0% used marijuana at least once in past 30 days
10.0% used marijuana daily/near daily in the past 30 days
3.3% drove after recent marijuana use

Percentage of Past 30 Day Substance Use among Colorado Adults, Colorado 2014 to 2021

Data Sources: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS), 2021
Annual Emergency Department Discharge Rate
Cannabis ICD-10-CM Billing Codes per 100,000 Discharges
Colorado 2016 to 2021

These codes are intended for billing purposes. Presence of a marijuana code does not mean marijuana caused the health event.

Figure Notes
Significant decrease (*) or increase (+) compared to previous year

When comparing 2019 to 2021 the Discharge Rate increased among:

5 years old and younger
48.0 to 89.1 Marijuana codes per 100,000 Discharges

5 years old and younger
36.7 to 75.9 Marijuana Poisoning codes per 100,000 Discharges
Reported Marijuana Exposures, Colorado 2021
In 2021, there were 34,229 human exposures reported to RMPDS and 310 (0.9%) were marijuana exposures.

48.7%
5 years old and younger

56.5%
Edible

57.7%
Unintentional

Annual Frequency of Reported Marijuana Exposures, Colorado 2000-2021

*The largest percentage increases in reported marijuana exposures to RMPDS occurred when adult use cannabis retail and medical markets opened to the public in 2014 & 2010, respectively.

Produced by: Marijuana Health Monitoring Program
Data Sources: Rocky Mountain Poison & Drug Safety, 2021
SUMMARY: MARIJUANA

From 2019 to 2021

- Decreases in marijuana use and marijuana-related vehicle safety in youth, but no changes in adults
- No changes in methods of marijuana use
  - Smoking most prevalent
  - Dabbing & vaporizing second among youth
  - Eating/drinking second among adults
- Decreases in ED/hospital discharges with marijuana-related codes
- Increases in marijuana-related outcomes among children 5 years old or younger
THANKS!

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