This report focuses on King County-specific data from the Washington State Healthy Youth Survey (HYS).

- Results presented show associations within the data set, not causal relationships.
- HYS defines "marijuana use" as one or more times in the last 30 days, and "regular" use as one to two times a week.
- HYS asked youth about their perception of harm from regular use for "people," not "kids your age."

*Interpret with caution: there is no evidence of a CAUSAL relationship between legalization of retail marijuana and the decrease in youth marijuana use.

Changes in the developing brain, including:

- Negative impacts on memory, attention, and the ability to think clearly. 
  
- Poorer school performance. 
  
  Percent at academic risk (grades C or below) (2016)
  
  35.5%

- Addiction: among youth who start using marijuana before age 18, 1 in 6 can become addicted.

- Mental health problems like depression, anxiety, and psychosis.
Risks of youth marijuana use, continued:

Criminal justice system involvement:
- In Washington, marijuana is still illegal for anyone under 21
- Under federal law, cultivation, sale, and possession of marijuana are illegal
- Youth of color are especially at risk: research demonstrates disproportionate incarceration rates, even in states where retail marijuana is legal for adults

Motor vehicle crash risk:
- Marijuana impacts the skills required for safe driving, particularly when combined with alcohol
- 36% of 10th graders who reported marijuana use drove within three hours of using marijuana (2016)
- 61% of 10th graders who reported marijuana use rode in a car with a driver who had used marijuana (2016)

Some youth are more at risk of using marijuana than others

Lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth report use rates at nearly double that of straight youth

The high rate of marijuana use by lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth compared to straight youth may reflect multiple risk factors:
- Youth in this group may face industry targeting, unaccepting families, hostile school environments, and homelessness
- Bullying is also an important risk factor, highlighting an issue that impacts mental health and education - youth who report being bullied for their perceived sexual orientation (regardless of actual sexual orientation) are twice as likely to report marijuana use
- Lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth face higher rates of self-harm, suicide, and substance use and report using marijuana to self-medicate

Updated: October 2018
Marijuana use varies by race and ethnicity

Understanding youth marijuana use by race and ethnicity is complex:

- HYS sample sizes for American Indian/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander youth are too small to ensure precise estimates of marijuana use rates - actual use in these communities may be higher or lower
- King County’s Asian population is diverse, and many sources confirm disparities within the broad category of "Asian" - further exploration is needed to understand marijuana use within specific Asian communities, as well as other aggregated categories of race or ethnicity

Youth in Seattle report significantly higher use rates than youth in other King County regions

Risk factors that may contribute to youth marijuana use vary by place:

- Fewer students in Seattle and South King County perceive regular marijuana use as harmful, and more students report having easy access to marijuana
- More students in Seattle report having at least one best friend who uses, and more students in South King County report living with a marijuana user

Youth with a best friend who uses are more likely to use

Youth living with someone who uses are more likely to use

Updated: October 2018
Youth use marijuana in multiple ways, but mostly smoke it

- Smoke: 69.3%
- Eat: 16%
- Drink: 5%
- Vaporize: 5.4%
- Other: 4.2%

Among 10th graders who reported use (2016)

Youth mostly get marijuana from friends

Youth get marijuana...
1. From friends (63%)
2. By giving money to someone to get it (18%)
3. At a party (17%)
4. Some other way (16%)
5. From home (with or without permission) (11%)

Among 10th graders who reported getting marijuana in the last 30 days, regardless of whether they reported use (2016). Respondents could select multiple sources, only top 5 are presented.

In most ways, King County mirrors state and national trends

- In Washington and the United States, as in King County, youth marijuana use has decreased or remained flat over time.\(^1\)\(^-\)\(^9\)
- The percentage of youth in the state and nation who perceive harm from regular marijuana use has decreased.\(^2\)\(^-\)\(^9\)

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Data Limitations

Healthy Youth Survey data provides a snapshot of youth marijuana use in King County. Data limitations include:

- Information is self-reported by public school students who were in school on the day of survey administration. Therefore, the voices of those most at risk for marijuana use may be missing.
- Differences in marijuana use are not analyzed by frequency of use (i.e., regular use versus one-time use).

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