

TO: Mayor and Council Members
Marlene Best, City Manager
Shawn Hagerty, City Attorney

FROM: Annette Ortiz, CMC, City Clerk

DATE: August 10, 2022

SUBJ: Updated Council Meeting Materials – August 10, 2022

PUBLIC HEARING:

- (7) Second Reading and Adoption of an Ordinance Amending Chapter 7.04 of Title 7 (“Public Peace, Morals, and Welfare”) of the Santee Municipal Code to Regulate Cannabis Businesses. (Finance – McDermott)**

The attached correspondence for above mentioned Item was received and is provided for your consideration.



From: [REDACTED]
To: [John Minto](#); [Rob McNelis](#); [Laura Koval](#); [Ronn Hall](#); [Dustin Trotter](#)
Subject: LETTER REGARDING ITEM 7 on CITY COUCIL AGENDA TONIGHT.....PLEASE READ and ENTER INTO THE RECORD
Date: Wednesday, August 10, 2022 8:41:10 AM

My name is Diane Grace.

I'm writing to you as a very concerned mother, grandmother, parent group/PTA member, and I follow legislation related to children.

I think it is important for the City Council to remember that marijuana storefront business plans include attracting new and young people as customers so they become lifetime users, and entice infrequent marijuana users to use daily.

I wonder if that is really a goal for this City Council who has always supported policies that enhance good health for its citizens.

Especially since what is really sold at marijuana stores are turbocharged, ultra-high THC products.

Parents have fought for state legislation to improve warning labels on marijuana products, just to find out all of our efforts have been disregarded in favor of marijuana lobbyists' money.

Because of this, we depend on our Cities to understand that our health is far more important than any proposed money from the Big Marijuana.

Thank you.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [John Minto](#); [Rob McNelis](#); [Laura Koval](#); [Ronn Hall](#); [Dustin Trotter](#)
Subject: Please read City Council today Item 7
Date: Wednesday, August 10, 2022 11:06:15 AM

Good morning Mayor Minto and City Council members.

As parent, grandparent, and parent advocate, I have been talking to my PTA friends regarding the City's consideration of marijuana businesses, especially retail stores

We think there are two points that are being misunderstood.

- No one is debating that marijuana exists in Santee. However it does not have to be sold here.

It is the visuality of seeing marijuana storefronts selling pot as part of commercial marketplace that causes the harm.

And the accompanying predatory advertisements, billboards, promotions, and merchandise.

Every City has a vibe, pot does NOT need to be Santee's.

- The idea that the City needs an ordinance so they can gather taxes from deliveries into the City has no evidence that would work.

No delivery company is going to register with the City, and there is no way a delivery vehicle can be detected.

Thank you.

Warmly, Judi S Riddle

From: [Kelly McCormick](#)
To: [John Minto](#); [Rob McNelis](#); [Laura Koval](#); [Ronn Hall](#); [Dustin Trotter](#)
Subject: Public Comment-Item 7 Cannabis Business Regulation
Date: Wednesday, August 10, 2022 11:06:40 AM

Dear Mayor and Council Members,

It is ironic that a measure to promote commercialized marijuana will be discussed immediately after the "Safe Santee" item.

The commercial marijuana industry does not reduce the black-market. In fact, numerous articles from the LA Times, Union Tribune, CalMatters, and others confirm that the illicit industry has grown in size since Prop 64 was passed.

The marijuana industry is lobbying for lower tax rates at the state level and in cities including San Diego, claiming they can't compete against the illicit market.

If this measure is passed, you can expect High-THC concentrates to be heavily advertised. This industry exists to increase sales. The Rand Corporation and others have found that adolescents exposed to marijuana advertising are more likely to have a favorable view of the drug and are more likely to use the drug. This is a serious health risk for individuals and for the community.

The U.S. Surgeon General has issued an advisory on the mental health dangers of these products, when used by those under 25 years-of-age. These include a higher risk of cannabis-induced psychosis, schizophrenia, paranoia and suicide. In 2020, a Colorado study found that 39% of complete suicides under the age of 25 tested positive for THC.

How does any of this make Santee a safer place?

Kelly McCormick

From: [Mark Wilcox](#)
To: jminto@cityofsanteeca.gov; [Rob McNelis](#); [Laura Koval](#); [Ronn Hall](#); [Dustin Trotter](#)
Subject: Item 7
Date: Wednesday, August 10, 2022 9:05:33 AM

Item 7

jminto@cityofsanteeca.gov
rmcnelis@cityofsanteeca.gov
lkoval@cityofsanteeca.gov
rhall@cityofsanteeca.gov
dtrotter@cityofsanteeca.gov

Good morning Santee City Council.

I am a father who is very committed in my volunteer work to protecting young people from drug use that short circuits their journey to adulthood faster than any other problem.

Many of us are concerned about the City's capacity to deal with damages or injuries to Santee's citizens especially youth, and our property through marijuana consumption, and no amount of taxes you expect can assist if we encourage marijuana businesses in the City.

I am concerned the marijuana storefronts indicate that the City Council supports and perhaps even wants to promote marijuana consumption which is duplicitous we realize that the City does not support smoking or vaping.

Make no mistake smoking and vaping tobacco and marijuana have the same negative health outcomes.

And Marijuana complicates the picture with its dangerous use of high THC concentrated products effect on mental health, especially when use begins during the pivotal years of 12 -30.

TY

From: [Nancy](#)
To: [Rob McNelis](#)
Subject: Please read
Date: Wednesday, August 10, 2022 2:46:01 PM

Good Evening Santee City Council

I am Nancy Logan.

As a mother, grandmother and neighbor, I have been concerned about marijuana businesses coming to Santee.

As you make your decision, please consider the following:

The real problem with marijuana businesses is the visuality of these stores to youth as an acceptable commercial product for their use.

Retail Marijuana businesses stores and their merchandise charm new and young users as customers and tempt infrequent marijuana users to use pot daily.

These are the two dangerous problems for pot use: youth use and daily use.

Only 30% of California cities and counties allow retail marijuana stores.

Good health is precious and the City should only involve themselves in those business activities that will enhance good health – not marijuana businesses.

Regards,

Nancy Logan

From: [Terri-Ann Skelly](#)
To: [John Minto](#); [Rob McNelis](#); [Laura Koval](#); [Ronn Hall](#); [Dustin Trotter](#)
Subject: Item #7
Date: Wednesday, August 10, 2022 7:56:10 AM

Dear Santee City Council.

I have been following the City's consideration of marijuana business in our town, I express my grave concern that this is an unfortunate move.

If this decision is predicated on some sort of financial gain through a marijuana business tax, I would like you to know that

NO amount of taxes collected will compensate for the harm marijuana businesses create for young adults, and to neighborhood.

As a mother three adult sons, I work on behalf of young adults to safeguard their passage to productive adulthood.

It will never be a good thing for our youth to see the advertising and marketing that will come from having marijuana businesses in their communities.

Not to mention the merchandise and clothing from marijuana storefronts that will become a part of their wearing apparel

Thank you for this opportunity to share with you my concerns regarding this most unfortunate situation.

Terri-Ann Skelly


From: [Kathleen Lippitt](#)
To: [Rob McNelis](#); [Ronn Hall](#); [Laura Koval](#); [Dustin Trotter](#)
Cc: [Arliiss Cates](#); [Clerk Info](#)
Subject: Document fto inform your continued plan to permit marijuana businesses. Cities like Chula Vista have found themselves dealing with the problems with a litigious industry that were made worse by HdL
Date: Monday, August 8, 2022 3:05:23 PM
Attachments: [VoSD 8.08.22 Chula Vista Already a Mess \(1\).docx](#)
[Daily Mail 7.01.22 Marijuana a nightmare.docx](#)
[Daily Maily 7.22.22 Negative consequences.docx](#)
[Handout - Opinion piece - Checking Misleading Claims that California's Cannabis Industry Is Suffering.docx](#)
[Handout - Billie Jo Jannen - response to Cannabis and Social Equity.pdf](#)
[Handout - Billie Jo Jannen - respose to Env. Justice.pdf](#)
[Handout - Setting-the-Record-Straight FS 3.17.22.pdf](#)
[Psychosis, Addiction, Chronic Vomiting As Weed Becomes More Potent, Teens Are Getting Sick.docx](#)

Dear Mayor Minto and Councilmember Hall,

First, those of us who have watched the evolution of the marijuana industry with the marijuana industries that target cities and counties appreciate the integrity and your commitment to vote on behalf of what is best for your residents instead of what the marijuana industry wants. The only winners in an industry advocates versus public electeds contest are marijuana industry profiteers and political electeds who have succumbed to industry political and financial lobbying.

The research and evidence against the commercial legalization of the marijuana industry has continued to grow; mental health harms to adolescent brains, increased DUI's, increased environmental damage, inability to keep Prop 64's promise to eliminate the black market, the collaborative relationships between permitted and unpermitted marijuana businesses, the development of hemp isomers that are 5x as strong as THC, quickly disappearing promised marijuana tax revenues, increased associated violence with the heavy use of high THC products, on-going marketing to youth of high THC products, increased marijuana normalization, increased hospital admissions, record levels of youth marijuana dependency and addiction, the need for more treatment programs, we have continued to be discouraged by the intentionally blindness to these finding. The on-going waste of taxpayer money being spent to support this industry is a shameful diversion of public money that should have never been allocated to this predatory industry.

Political leaders have made this drug more accessible and easily obtained in both licensed and unlicensed stores. Dr. D'Souza states that **“More and more young people are using more potent cannabis at younger ages. [Cannabis use in young people](#) is reaching record rates, increasing from 37 percent in 2014 to 43 percent in 2019. Teenagers of today are also more likely to consume marijuana than tobacco.**

JAMA Pediatrics found 10.7 percent of teenagers between the age of 12 and 17 developed an addiction to cannabis within 12 months of use, and 20.1 percent developed addiction after 3 years. For young adults aged 18 to 25, 6.4 percent developed addiction in a year, and 10.9 percent in three years.

The costs of marijuana legalization are subsidized by the public and the profits are privatized by the marijuana industry and those they have financially influenced. Though the California Department of Cannabis Control states that **“A strong legal**

cannabis industry is good for all Californians", NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH.

Respectfully,
Kathleen Lippitt

--Attachments below.

Kathleen M. Lippitt, MPH

Public Health Practitioner

e-mail:

cell:

Already a Mess, Chula Vista's 'Capricious' Cannabis Permit Process Scrambled Even More by Court Ruling

Chula Vista's pot permits system is a disaster. Now, after a court ruled the city screwed up, it'll need to figure out a fix on the fly.

An appellate court is forcing the city of Chula Vista to keep a cannabis company in the running for a license to operate in the city. One problem, though, is the city has no licenses left to hand out.

The case has brought attention to the allegedly petty and arbitrary way the city and its main consultant on the permitting process has handled applicants and it is the latest folly in the mess the city's cannabis permitting system has become since the City Council authorized dispensaries to open within city limits. Delays and lawsuits have plagued the process and only a few entities have managed to make their way through it.

A California appellate court in July sided with the company Caligrown, which had applied for one of the licenses to operate a storefront dispensary. The court found that Chula Vista's rejection of the Caligrown's storefront license was "arbitrary and capricious" and an abuse of the city's regulations.

In their ruling, the appellate judges ordered that Chula Vista keep Caligrown in the running for a permit. But the city has already promised or given away all its licenses and some of those businesses are already operational.

Chula Vista's ordinance allows for eight storefront retail cannabis business licenses and one delivery service per each of the four City Council districts. To get one, applicants must go through two rounds of vetting and demonstrate upfront that they have \$250,000 in liquid assets, a business plan, an operating plan and relevant qualifications.

During the first phase, the city's finance director and police chief review the application to make sure everything checks out and the applicant does not also have a criminal record. Assuming everything's good, the applicant then goes through a scoring process by a consultant., as the second phase. Or at least that's how it's supposed to work.

Caligrown's Case. Caligrown sought a permit to open storefronts in City Council Districts 1, 3 and 4 in 2019 and 2020. But the police chief faulted the company for not submitting fingerprints and because one of the principals of the company was once convicted of petty theft. That principal, however, only owns 2 percent of the company and the conviction, from 1964, had been expunged.

To review the application, the city also relied on an outside consultant, Matthew Eaton of HdL, who gave Caligrown a relatively low score because the information in the application was formatted in a way he didn't like, according to Eaton's sworn testimony from earlier hearings. It was, in other words, a problem of organization, not of substance.

"They didn't follow their own rules," said David Demian, Caligrown's attorney. "The legal system is holding the city accountable to follow its duly enacted ordinance, and its duly adopted, publicly adopted, and published regulations. It's just not certain what can or will happen next."

How Things Worked. The legal setback has put HdL under scrutiny. The firm is paying Chula Vista's legal fees in the lawsuit and has faced tough scrutiny in other California municipalities for its cannabis licensing consultancy services, as well as locally. HdL no longer works with Chula Vista.

A critical 2019 report on HdL in MJBizDaily quoted Kelly Bacon, a former deputy city manager at Chula Vista, who acknowledged that the consultant's relationship with other municipalities wasn't quite so rosy and, said she hoped HdL would bring "a fresh set of eyes to the process and that it's fair and impartial." When asked earlier this year, Chula Vista declined to provide a reason for why it is no longer contracted with HdL, nor when the relationship was severed. But Anne Steinberger, a representative for the city, added that the city's contract with the consultancy was limited to the initial phase of the application process and that it has been processing the rest of the applications internally.

In nearly 2020, when HdL was still processing the city's applications, Caligrown complained after receiving its rejections, claiming, among other things, that the scoring process was supposed to happen in Phase 2 and they weren't aware they were being evaluated. Then-City Manager Gary Halbert ordered that the consultant re-review the application but the consultant ended up pushing up the score in only one of four relevant categories, and didn't re-score the rest of the categories. Again, the application was denied, so Caligrown sued after its application was again denied. But while the lawsuit was ongoing, the city continued to award licenses, despite being asked not to in Caligrown's complaint.

Compounding the problem, an attorney representing the city, Scott Taylor, was asked during the appeal court hearing on July 13 if the city had already given away its licenses in the same districts where Caligrown had applied. At the time, Taylor said he didn't have the "most up-to-date information" but that, as far as he knew, no licenses had been issued.

Turns out the city they had been issuing and giving out licenses in those areas. Diane Howell, a Chula Vista spokeswoman, confirmed last week in an email that the city has in fact issued the maximum number of storefront licenses in Districts 1, 3 and 4, though some of them still require state approval.

And not only were they giving out licenses in those areas, the city was giving licenses to applicants who hadn't even applied for those areas. **Both March and Ash and California Holistics, for instance, received a license in District 1 despite neither entity submitting an application for that district. That is permissible in the city's rules so long as the city can claim that it has exhausted all its other applicants in the original district.**

Laura Wilkinson, who owns Caligrown, contends that the city never exhausted its list. “I want the licenses, and the appellate court instructions were clear,” said Wilkinson. “Had they followed their own ordinance I would be operating in District 1 and probably 3 and 4 as well.”



March and Ash location in Chula Vista.

The Winners. March and Ash’s general counsel and co-owner, Bret Peace, said he was happy to receive an email earlier this year granting his company a license in that district, and that he does not know how or why they received it, since they had initially applied in another district. California Holistics did not respond to a request for comment.

March and Ash is one of several local companies that have managed to succeed regularly when municipalities here and across the state offer licenses to operate.

The companies that succeed all share common traits but one of them in particular: They have built up political connections and a team of consultants. March and Ash, in fact, has worked with Grassroots Resources, a political consulting firm that employs Chula Vista City Councilwoman Andrea Cardenas.

When asked at a live Voice of San Diego podcast in June about her ongoing financial relationship with outside interests while serving on the City Council, she replied that she’s careful to keep the two separate and recuse herself when necessary.

“I don’t have any clients, really – I do a lot of the admin stuff, and you know, since I got elected, that’s been an even bigger market. It’s always been very difficult for people to force me to work on something that I’m not passionate about,” she said. “And so, even now when we’re talking about the cannabis industry, I’m very careful not to blend those lines, because if it doesn’t look good, it’s not good.”

Anne Steinberger, the city’s marketing and communications manager, also told Voice of San Diego that the cannabis licenses are handled by city staff and that council members do not direct or make decisions on applications.

Going forward, part of the appellate court’s decision requires the city to not only rescind its rejection of Caligrown but to also re-score the application. This was originally done by HdL, but HdL is no longer working for Chula Vista.

It’s not clear at this point how the city intends to comply with the appellate court’s decision because it can’t easily take a license away from one operator and give it to Caligrown without instigating another lawsuit. The city attorney’s office said it was still evaluating the ruling. Chula Vista’s City Council held a closed session discussion on the topic on July 26, but the details are not public.

One possible remedy: elected officials recommend the city increase the number of licenses on the books. Chula Vista’s ordinance allows the city to increase the number of authorized cannabis storefronts, but “only after receiving and considering a report from the City Manager regarding any observed or projected adverse impacts on the community from such businesses.”

Another remedy could include rescinding licenses. According to the city, licensees are required to sign an operating agreement that includes, among other terms, licensees’ obligation to “indemnify and release” Chula Vista in the event of a legal challenge to its license approval process.

Whatever the case, the complaints raised by Caligrown are not the only ones that the city will have to contend with. There are still two pending lawsuits against the city alleging similar discrepancies in its licensing process.

Ken Sobel, a lawyer and owner of Cannabis Village, claimed Chula Vista failed to follow its own rules in determining who gets a business license and that HdL didn’t follow the city’s rules in scoring applicants.

Urbn Leaf, one of the major dispensaries throughout the state, also filed suit, claiming the city’s licensing process is “baffling ... arbitrary, capricious, and contrary to the law.” Its application was denied for allegedly violating the city’s zoning rules in 2012, when owner Will Senn operated a medical marijuana dispensary in San Diego. Senn eventually settled with San Diego, which admitted no wrongdoing, but it still wasn’t good enough for Chula Vista, which for years has battled illegal dispensaries, to award Urbn Leaf a license.

EXCLUSIVE: How California's legal cannabis dream became a public health nightmare: It's a class B drug in the UK - but in the US state it's led to spiralling addiction, psychotic illnesses and hospitals facing a deluge of poisonings

A row of luxury 'healing' creams is guarded by a locked glass cabinet, gilded in gold trim.

The packaging is stylishly minimal – clean and white with small black typeface – and beside the tubs sit decorative, artificial fruit and images of sprawling fields, with a small flyer to remind customers of the high-quality, organic nature of the products.

I spot one pot – a snip at \$43, or roughly £35 – that is specifically designed for 'replenishing and rejuvenating' tissues in the, er, vagina. Alongside me, expensively dressed customers peruse the goods, clutching colourful iced smoothies and juices. I'm in upmarket Beverly Hills in **Los Angeles, California**, in one of the area's many so-called 'wellness' shops, just a stone's throw from designer boutiques such as Gucci and Saint Laurent. It's a far cry from Holland & Barrett, not least because all the products here at the Serra boutique contain high-grade, genetically engineered cannabis.

There are balms and lotions, things to eat and, of course, to smoke. One display cabinet showcases dozens of dried cannabis flowers, each bud sitting in its own pretty porcelain dish, labelled according to its supposed benefit: happiness, creativity, relaxation.

In another cabinet is a perfect grid of individual chocolate truffles, priced up to £5 a pop, a bit like something you'd find in the food hall in a department store. Only these sweet treats are laced with 10mg of THC, the psychoactive component in the marijuana plant.

Recreational use of cannabis, which is classified as a class B drug in the UK, possession of which could land you with up to five years in prison, has been legal in California since 2016. Two decades earlier it was made available to buy, via a doctor's prescription, to treat a variety of minor ailments from back pain to anxiety.

Today, about one in five people in California use cannabis regularly, and it has become something of a health trend – not simply legal and above board but, judging by the stylish throng at Serra when I visited, practically de rigueur.

The sales assistants – who all look like Hollywood star turned health guru Gwyneth Paltrow – tell me of the variety of uses: aching muscles, headaches, anxiety, insomnia, arthritic pain and many more. 'I take a very small dose every day, just to calm any nerves I might be feeling,' one willowy, tanned brunette tells me. 'It's definitely changed my life for the better.'

Out on the streets, billboards advertising cannabis shops, or dispensaries as they are officially known, which makes them sound very medical, are on every corner, inviting customers to try 'alternative healing'.

Some shops are also art galleries, while others sell hipster favourites such as artisan coffee.

It's an industry that turns over roughly £8 billion – and rakes in more than £2.5 billion in tax revenue – every year. And I must admit, the way it's all sold, as some kind of divine health-giving elixir, certainly makes the idea of dabbling more palatable. But I am not here to partake. Because behind the shiny pots and serenely smiling assistants, a far more disturbing picture is emerging.

Over the past few years, doctors in California have begun to voice concerns about the repercussions of increasing cannabis use. In particular, how the laissez-faire approach is fuelling a surge in addiction and mental illness. Many are particularly concerned about Los Angeles, where teenagers use the drug more often than in any other Californian city.

I spent a week travelling across LA and beyond, meeting emergency doctors in the eye of the storm, as well as devastated parents who say their families have been torn apart by cannabis.

Part of my journey followed in the footsteps of London Mayor Sadiq Khan, who recently visited a number of LA's dispensaries on a 'fact finding mission'. He announced that a new group would be set up to look at the benefits of legalising cannabis in the UK, although Home Secretary Priti Patel dismissed the suggestion, saying he had 'no powers' to make any such changes.

Perhaps Khan would benefit from a chat with Dr Roneet Lev, an emergency doctor at Scripps Mercy Hospital in San Diego, who tells me: 'We've been seeing the problems for a while now: depressive breakdowns, psychosis, suicidal thoughts, all related to cannabis. The patients are regular people, not down-and-outs.

'I want people to know the truth about this drug. We've been sold a lie, that cannabis use is harmless and even has a multitude of health benefits. It is exactly the same as what happened with tobacco. The industry told the public it was good for their health at first, before it was proven to be deadly.'

In California, hospital admissions for cannabis-related complications have shot up – from 1,400 in 2005 to 16,000 by 2019. In California, and the other 18 states that have legalised cannabis, rates of addiction are nearly 40 per cent higher than states without legal cannabis, according to research by Columbia University.

A study published on Thursday suggested recreational marijuana users were 25 per cent more likely to end up needing emergency hospital treatment. And, according to data from the US Fatality Analysis Reporting System, the risk of being involved in a cannabis-related accident is significantly higher in states where the drug is legal.

There are other concerns too, not least about the black market that has grown by nearly 100 per cent since cannabis laws were relaxed, as bootleggers sell products at a lower price, undercutting the registered shops.

Experts say these problems are mostly down to record levels of cannabis use – with roughly 40 per cent of Californians now saying they've dabbled at least once, according to a California Department of Public Health survey. UK laws around the

medical use of cannabis were relaxed four years ago, allowing specialist doctors to prescribe medicine made from the drug to some patients with epilepsy, or to treat vomiting related to cancer treatment and symptoms of multiple sclerosis. Just last week, The Mail on Sunday revealed that 9,000 Britons are regularly prescribed the drug by private doctors, in some cases outside of official rules.

Pro-drug legalisation campaigners have long seen medical use as a way to gain a foothold in public acceptance. And perhaps it's working. Polls show that between 30 and 40 per cent of Britons are in favour of full legalisation – with research suggesting six million would smoke cannabis if it was legalised.

As it is, about a third of Britons say that they've used cannabis, according to data by research firm Statista.

California became the first US state to authorise the sale of cannabis for medical reasons in 1996 after a handful of studies showed small doses of the drug were beneficial for patients suffering cancer pain.

At the time, health chiefs were desperate to find a solution to the record-high numbers of Americans addicted to prescription painkillers: opioids such as oxycodone and methadone. Cannabis was touted as a less harmful alternative.

'Suddenly it became a health product which doctors were giving out, and people trust doctors,' says Scott Chipman, chairman of American lobby group Citizens Against Legalizing Marijuana. 'People thought, well if it helps people who are dying of cancer and in pain, we support the use of it.'

'The state ruled that doctors who prescribed it would have to have a special licence, but no one checked. Within two years we had 240 stores in San Diego prescribing and selling medical cannabis, and not one of them had a licence. It meant anyone could walk in and get a prescription if they said they had insomnia, anxiety or even an ingrown toenail.'

Other experts I spoke to describe similar scenarios, with private doctors offering 'medical marijuana cards' which entitled patients to walk into any dispensary and buy the drug, no questions asked.

'When full legalisation came into force a decade later, the 'health halo' of cannabis spread further. 'Dispensaries look like Apple stores now,' says Chipman. 'They are a very nice place to be.'

The benefits of cannabis are said to be down to two key elements. First, cannabidiol, or CBD, extracted and put into body oils, candles and a host of other wellness products available in the UK. Then there's tetrahydrocannabinol, THC, which affects brain chemicals and is responsible for the 'high'. Last month a major review of 25 studies concluded there was insufficient evidence for the long-term pain-relieving effect of cannabis.

'As for mental health, a 2020 review by psychiatrists at the University of Melbourne concluded the evidence is 'too weak' to prove cannabis helps anxiety, depression or insomnia. Scientists overwhelmingly conclude that frequent use of the drug is not worth the risks.'

THC stimulates areas of the brain involved with mood, attention and memory, while triggering the release of the hormone dopamine, responsible for feelings of reward and pleasure. Small, infrequent doses have little long-term impact, according to studies. But with prolonged, regular use, signals in these key brain areas can start to go awry.'

Studies have shown that frequent ingestion of cannabis can increase the risk of serious mental illness like psychosis and schizophrenia, as well as insomnia, social anxiety disorder and suicidal thoughts.

'We are seeing a lot more patients who have gone from smoking once every few months to using cannabis every day, and they don't realise the harms,' says Dr Ziva Cooper, who runs the Center For Cannabis And Cannabinoids at the University of California in Los Angeles.'

'Frequent and heavy use is becoming so normalised in LA, those who are addicted or have complications might not realise it because all their friends are the same.' Experts say another serious consequence of legalisation is the increasing potency of cannabis.

Plants are bred and chemically treated so they contain ever more THC. While an organic cannabis plant produces flowers with about four per cent THC, the items in most dispensaries today range from about ten to 98 per cent. A similar pattern is happening in the UK's illegal market, with average THC levels in cannabis at roughly 14 per cent, according to a King's College London study.'

Regular use of quantities above ten per cent are linked to a higher risk of addiction, violent behaviour and a newly recognised condition called cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome, or 'scromiting'. 'It means screaming and violent vomiting,' says Dr Lev. 'I call it the audible cannabis condition, because I hear the violent screams down the hall before I see the patient.' Before 2016, Dr Lev rarely saw patients with this problem. **Now she sees at least one per shift. Symptoms can continue for days, or weeks, and there is no effective treatment. Three young men have died from complications of cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome since it was first identified in 2004.** In Colorado, emergency admissions for the condition have doubled since cannabis was legalised in 2012.

At the dispensary visited by Mr Khan earlier this year, called Traditional in trendy downtown LA, I'm intrigued by a tiny pot of crystals, which look like **broken-up sugar lumps. The shop assistant explains they are called edible cannabis crystalline. According to the label, it is 95 per cent THC. 'This will give you a really intense high, so we wouldn't recommend it for someone who isn't experienced,' they add. Experts describe these highly concentrated products as 'the crack cocaine of cannabis', and say demand for ever-stronger stuff is another by-product of legalisation.**

'Because so many Californians have been using for so long, they develop a tolerance and go in search of more powerful highs,' says Kevin Sabet, a former White House drugs policy adviser who runs the anti-cannabis legalisation group, SAM (Smart Approaches to Marijuana). 'So the industry has to keep inventing more products to keep them hooked.'

As for the belief that legalisation and regulation will eliminate the criminal element: the illegal cannabis market in California is booming, estimated to be worth £6 billion – twice that of the legal industry.

Scott Chipman of Citizens Against Legalizing Marijuana says: 'These operations charge far less for high-potency products because they have no overheads, which is popular with customers.'

Michelle Leopold, 57, from San Francisco, has fallen victim to the worst possible consequences of the normalisation of cannabis use. In 2019, her 18-year-old son Trevor died after dabbling with prescription painkillers – and unwittingly taking a tablet of powerful opioid Fentanyl – following four years of addiction to cannabis. 'The only reason he touched those pills was because he was searching for stronger highs,' says Michelle, who owns a chain of hardware stores with her husband Jeff, 56. **She believes studious nature-lover Trevor would never have smoked in the first place had it not been for the relaxed laws.**

When Trevor's habit began in 2014, cannabis was 'everywhere', she says. 'At that time it was permitted for medical reasons – but regulation was a farce. He wasn't yet 16 but he and his friends could log on to a website, say they had anxiety, and get marijuana. I don't think the potential harms were on his radar.'

Within a few weeks, Trevor was smoking most days after school. 'We very quickly realised that this was not the same stuff we'd seen people smoking at college. It didn't make him mellow or relaxed, it made him angry and violent.' Michelle's 'adorable' son began punching walls during screaming arguments with his parents. 'He broke cell phones and computer screens in anger,' she adds. 'He started skipping school and his grades plummeted. He was a bright, studious kid before. We tried therapy, raiding his room and tough love. Nothing worked to get him to stop.'

Trevor enrolled in three rehabilitation programmes, at a total cost of more than £100,000, but none worked. Then, in 2019, shortly after Trevor turned 18, a medical marijuana card arrived in the post. 'Trevor suffered with terrible anxiety about his final exams in his last year of high school, and everywhere you look there are messages telling you cannabis helps you de-stress,' says Michelle. 'We obviously confiscated it, but every time we did he'd order another one.'

That September, Trevor began reading business studies at Sonoma State University, just outside San Francisco. On the evening of November 17, 2019, a friend gave Trevor four painkiller pills, one of which was Fentanyl. The drug carries a high risk of respiratory failure, where patients become so sedated they stop breathing. Trevor's body was found by his roommate the next morning. Michelle says: 'After it happened, we couldn't be quiet any more – it's a matter of saving lives. The industry is doing its best to drive a false narrative about the raft of health benefits of cannabis. Meanwhile, there are hundreds of parents like me who are losing their children.'

After speaking with Michelle, it is hard to imagine any benefit of legalising cannabis that would be worth the risk. Said benefits are supposedly freeing up police time to deal with more serious crimes, and generating Government income via high taxes on cannabis products.

Advocates also say legalisation reduces opioid dependence, as chronic pain patients are self-treating with cannabis instead.

But two 2019 analyses concluded that the tax revenue from Californian dispensaries was 'far lower than expected'.

As for freeing up police time, a 2020 report by the US Department of Justice found legalisation did not have a 'consistently positive' impact on public safety.

I hear first-hand about this when I visit Compton, in the south of Los Angeles. The area is known for its history of drug-related gang warfare and violent crime, and here it remains illegal to sell cannabis.

The area is unique, in that local politicians must ask residents for permission to pass certain laws, regardless of what the state rules. In 2018, the community voted against legal cannabis sales. Spearheading the anti-weed campaign were lifelong Compton residents James and Charmaine Hays, who I meet at their home.

James, 65, who owns a biomedical firm and ran for local mayor twice, explains: 'The majority of residents here own their home and are bringing up children. They don't want drugs in the neighbourhood.' He says many still recall the crack cocaine epidemic in the 1980s which hit Compton badly, killing thousands of young locals.

His concerns about cannabis grew shortly after legalisation came into play in California and drug dealers began operating out of abandoned local shops, posing as legal dispensaries. 'Whenever there are drugs around, there are gangs trying to steal them, and that's when you get the violence,' he says. The father-of-two adds: '[Cannabis] has been portrayed as this harmless product with health benefits which doctors give out.'

Residents received leaflets from the local cannabis industry, telling them how much income dispensaries would generate. But there was nothing about the potential harms. When we made clear to neighbours that this was a drug, they voted against.'

I ask him what he makes of the claims of some advocates: that legalisation of cannabis would reduce the number of black and Latino Americans in US prisons, who are more likely to be jailed for cannabis-related crimes. 'It is a total lie,' he replies. 'Most people who are in prison for cannabis-related crimes are in jail because they have done something serious. Either they've tried to smuggle tons of it across borders or they have been involved with other illegal drugs. 'Saying to these people, run a shop instead but be subjected to regulation and taxes, won't work.'

Just outside Compton, on the way home, I pull up at traffic lights beside a line of ten abandoned cars at the side of the road. I open the window and see the vehicles have smashed windows and flat tyres, and are surrounded by a flood of rubbish, with urine marks staining the pavement. A group of dishevelled men wander along the street. Some hang out of the cars, motionless. But it isn't the sight that overwhelms me, it is the smell of weed. I roll up the windows and feel relieved to be heading back to good, old sensible Britain in the morning.

Studies lay bare the cost of legalizing cannabis as Democrats try to lift federal ban

5.8% rise in car crashes, a spike in addictions and children as young as NINE interested in trying marijuana: Colorado Washington, Oregon, California and Nevada see rises in car crash deaths after permitting recreational cannabis use

- Slew of negative studies highlights everything from curious nine-year-olds to teenage addicts and marijuana smokers making for bad love partners
- Democrat Chuck Schumer aims to decriminalize marijuana in federal law, saying policy is 'immensely successful' in states
- Public mood has shifted: 58% now back legalization and 28% are against
- Advocates say cannabis can help sufferers of chronic pain and trauma and can net millions for state coffers
- Has cannabis harmed your family? Write to james.reinf@mailonline.com

The number of car crash injuries has risen by nearly six percent in states that have legalized recreational cannabis use — the latest study in a slew of negative reports to sound the alarm over the dangers of decriminalization.

Research this week from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety revealed a 5.8 percent rise in traffic crashes in Colorado Washington, Oregon, California and Nevada after those states legalized cannabis and 'pot shops' sprang up.

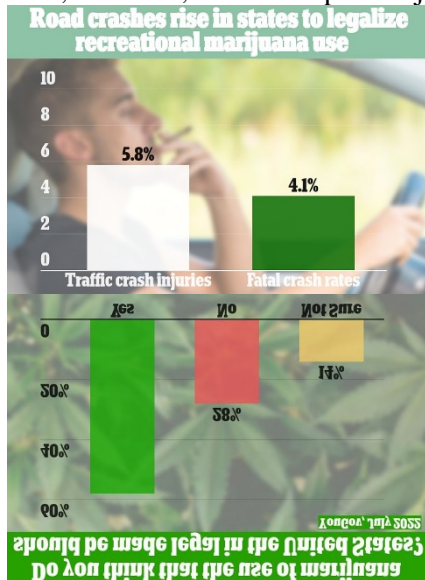
It was the latest in a series of studies on everything from teenage addiction to unhealthy relationships to cast doubt on this week's Democratic effort to end the federal prohibition on cannabis

Cannabis fans say the drug has health benefits and is far less harmful than alcohol, which is legal. It is also a lucrative business, netting an estimated \$30 billion in the US last year, offering windfall taxes for permissive states.

'The legalization of marijuana doesn't come without cost,' said Charles Farmer, the lead researcher on the car crash survey, which compared traffic data from 2009 to 2019 in states that both legalized and kept up restrictions on the drug.

Legalization 'removes the stigma of marijuana use' and makes it readily available, leading to more intoxicated and less-attentive drivers with slower reaction times and a tendency to veer outside their lanes, he said.

Overall, the five named states saw a 4.1 percent rise in fatal crashes. The increases were not universal. The worst-affected state, Colorado, saw a 17.8 percent jump in crash injures. In California, incidents rose by 5.7 percent.



Cannabis is slowly gaining legalization in America, with use being allowed in some form in all but six U.S. states 'States legalizing the recreational use of marijuana need to make it very clear, through education and strict enforcement, that not all uses are legal,' Farmer told DailyMail.com.

Another **study** this week from The City University of New York and Columbia University — in a state that legalized recreational marijuana last year but has yet to let dispensaries sell it — found that **cannabis use grows faster after legalization.**

Professor Renee Goodwin, the study's lead author, said cannabis use was 'markedly more prevalent' in states where recreational use was legal and warned of a **'potential explosion' of users as it became treated as normal.**

She warned against states 'rapidly passing legislation' bills without letting people know how to use cannabis safely and of its 'potential health risks' — whether smoked in joints, vaped or eaten as edible gummies.

A University of Michigan **study** this month raised alarms that children as young as nine were becoming curious about trying marijuana. **Many were influenced by 'messaging from parents' who did not impose rules on drug use, researchers said.**

Also this month, University College London and King's College London researchers **revealed** that adolescents were more than three times as likely as adults to get addicted to cannabis, increasing their chances of experiencing depression or anxiety.

Another **study** from Canada, where cannabis use has risen since it was decriminalized in 2018, showed that users of the drug were 22 percent more likely to end up in a hospital emergency room than others — often due to a serious injury or breathing problems.

Lead author Dr Nicholas Vozoris, of the University of Toronto, said responsible officials 'should discourage recreational'

use and ‘remind citizens about the harmful impacts of cannabis on health’, he said last month.

Experts take aim at dangers of cannabis legalization

Rates of car crash injuries rise by 5.8% across Colorado Washington, Oregon, California after legalization

Colorado alone saw a shocking 17.8 percent jump in the number of crash injuries

Cannabis use grows ‘markedly’ after legalization and people are not aware of the health risks, says New York study

Children as young as nine are curious about trying cannabis — often due to signals from parents and peers

Teenagers are more than three times as likely as adults to get addicted to cannabis

Cannabis users are 22 percent more likely to end up in a hospital emergency room than others

Users ‘misperceive’ how well their romantic relationships are faring, and are more critical, demanding, defensive and negative when rowing with loved ones

The UN says cannabis legalization has ‘accelerated’ its use and upped chances of depression and suicide

The UN’s annual world drug **report** last month warned against cannabis legalization, saying it ‘accelerated’ use and upped chances of depression and suicide. The world body also said the booming multibillion dollar cannabis industry was producing ever-more potent products.

An unusual **study** last month from Rutgers University found that cannabis users ‘misperceive’ how well their romantic relationships are faring, and tend to be more critical, demanding, defensive and negative when rowing with loved ones.

Even the often-touted benefits of cannabis are being called into question. Researchers at Oregon Health and Science University last month **reported** there was ‘very little scientifically valid’ proof that cannabis-related products relieved chronic pain in sufferers.

The trove of research can be seen as a wake-up call in a nation that is increasingly tolerant and even supportive of cannabis use — walking even a few blocks in New York or San Francisco nowadays often yields a nose-full of pungent marijuana smoke.

Nearly half of all US citizens now live in states where they can buy cannabis in a recreational market, and all but 13 states have legalized medical use. President Joe Biden this month said marijuana users should not go to jail.

Pro-legalization campaigners have slowly won the debate over the decades, with 58 percent of Americans now backing legalization, compared to the 28 percent who are against, according to a YouGov poll this month.

This week, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, a Democrat, introduced a bill to decriminalize marijuana at the federal level, saying moves in some states to permit the drug had ‘proven immensely successful’.

The Cannabis Administration and Opportunity Act would decriminalize marijuana at the federal level, allow states to make their own laws, and enact government monitoring rules akin to those for tobacco and alcohol. The bill’s passage is far from certain.

The bill comes after decades of seemingly fruitless efforts to crack down on the drug trade, often by heavy-handed police operations that land disproportionate numbers of minorities behind bars.

Cannabis fans say they should be able to choose what they consume, that police waste too much time on pointless marijuana busts, and that the drug can help relieve everyone from cancer victims to traumatized veterans.

It is also a big business. Research firm BDSA projects legal cannabis sales to hit \$30 billion this year, and \$47.6 billion by 2026, surpassing the craft beer industry. Taxes on sales net states coffers hundreds of millions of dollars each year.

Still, Scott Chipman, from the campaign group, Americans Against Legalizing Marijuana, warned against the push for legalization and of its ‘many negative and dangerous’ effects on millions of Americans. His group points to myriad social woes, from violent crime to mental illness, young addicts, marijuana firms producing super-strength drugs and targeting children as well as more intoxicated drivers on the roads. ‘It is particularly concerning how the marijuana user impacts the lives of those around them,’ Chipman told DailyMail.com. ‘Ask yourself, at what level of consumption would you feel safe being a passenger in a car with a driver who is using a psychotropic drug?’



This example of reckless driving in Draper, Utah, in June 2019 was linked to a motorist using Xanax and marijuana. States like Colorado that have legalized cannabis use have seen higher rates of road injury and death

A woman who was under the influence of marijuana when she caused a head-on collision in San Diego, California, that killed a passenger of another other car in March 2016 was later convicted of gross vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated.

Sen. Majority Leader Chuck Schumer on Thursday introduced a bill that would federally decriminalize marijuana and allows states to set up their own regulations on the cannabis industry.

Researcher Charles Farmer stated car crash injuries and deaths have increased in states where recreational cannabis is legal

Checking Misleading Claims that California's Cannabis Industry Is Suffering

Words matter. Facts do, too.

This adherence to the truth inspires [National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week](#), an annual observance dedicated to inspiring a civic dialogue about the science of drug use and addiction among youth. Launched by scientists at the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the event aims to shatter myths about drugs by spotlighting what science has taught us about drug use and addiction, while elevating evidence-based strategies to promote substance misuse prevention and awareness in communities nationwide.

Opinion

This year, the week collides with an alternate universe created by Big Cannabis. Since late 2021, cannabis powerbrokers have unleashed a no-holds-barred offensive in hopes of extracting reduced taxes and regulation from local and state elected officials.

In their quest to expand the industry's commercial footprint in cities and counties across the state, lobbyists have disseminated information that does not align with independent research conducted by the [Public Health Institute](#), which tracks local laws, cannabis licenses, and market data. This data is supported by the National Institutes of Health and other research funders.

An op-ed published last month in [CalMatters](#) and [republished in Times of San Diego](#) is Exhibit A in Big Cannabis' onslaught of misinformation. The commentary, written by the chief of government affairs at [CannaCraft](#), is filled with misleading statements about the cannabis industry's economic playing field.

Understanding the power of the printed word, researchers with [Getting it Right from the Start](#), a nonprofit cannabis policy think tank, factchecked this misleading commentary. Their report — [Setting the Record Straight: Fact-Checking Claims About California's Legal Cannabis Industry](#) — refutes the industry's propaganda.

The op-ed starts from a groundless premise — that the regulatory framework guiding the rollout of California's Proposition 64, the Adult Use of Marijuana Act, is flawed because it allows municipalities to opt out of licensing cannabis businesses. Consequently, the state has "precipitated the closure of thousands of medical cannabis dispensaries and the creation of 'dry zones' across the state." This phenomenon, in turn, "has reduced access to medical cannabis and opened the door wider to the illicit market."

At first glance, this argument against local control sounds reasonable, but it falls flat in the face of the misleading claims made in support. Here is a point-by-point fact check.

Fiction: *"And yet, today, there are fewer licensed retail outlets in the state than there were in 2015."*

Fact: California's legal retail cannabis infrastructure has been expanding steadily, reaching 1,485 retailers in February 2022. Furthermore, the state did not license retail cannabis outlets in 2015, so there is no accurate data on how many retail cannabis outlets there were in 2015.

Fiction: *"Legal cannabis sales are declining, and an emboldened illicit market is growing."*

Fact: The legal cannabis market in California is thriving. Dollar sales on the legal market are rising steadily and increased by 249% between implementation of Proposition 64 in 2018 and 2021. Although there is no way to determine the actual size of the illicit market, most experts agree it is growing. This growth, however, is driven largely by vast overproduction, much of it for export.

Since operating an illicit cannabis business will always have less overhead and government oversight than operating a regulated business, curbing this growth will not be solved by reducing taxes or regulation. A more likely outcome will be a failure to protect public health through regulation of the legal market.

Fiction: *"Despite popular approval of Prop. 64, only 85 of the state's 500 municipalities allow retail cannabis sales."*

Fact: A total of 281 of California's 539 cities and counties, or 52% of municipalities, allow retail cannabis sales either at storefronts or by delivery, and approximately 60% of California residents reside in these jurisdictions.

Fiction: "Today there are a mere 800 or so licensed cannabis retailers in the state. That means California has just two legal dispensaries for every 100,000 residents while other long-established recreational markets (Oregon and Colorado) have 7 to 9 times that many."

Fact: There are now 1,485 licensed cannabis retailers in the state for a ratio of 1 licensed retailer per 26,422 residents, higher if considering only areas which allow legal sale. In the interest of protecting the health of youth and children from aggressive marketing, Getting it Right from the Start's [Principles for Cannabis Regulation](#) recommend that ratio not exceed 1 licensed retailer per 19,000 inhabitants.

Integrity, transparency, and accountability drive public policies designed to benefit the public good. In a representative democracy, where our elected officials are expected to make informed, quality-of-life decisions on behalf of their constituents, the truth is paramount.

National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week is a reminder of the fragility of truth in the hands of people who place the prerogative of profit before the power of us.

[SAY San Diego's Central Region Prevention Coalition](#) is a neighborhood advocacy network spanning the San Diego's Mid-City and Southeastern regions. Comprised of parents, youth, educators and businesses, the neighborhood alliance advocates for public policies that protect children from predatory industries and promote community health, equity, and resilience.

From: Billie Jo Jannen, Chairman, Campo Lake Morena Community Planning Group

To: Donald Chase, Project Manager, County of San Diego Planning and Development Services and San Diego County Board of Supervisors

March 1, 2021

Re: Cannabis and Social Equity ordinance

Dear Planners and Supervisors:

The Campo Lake Morena Community Planning Group, at its March 1, 2021 meeting, voted unanimously to forward the recommendations below for the Cannabis and Social Equity project.

This project has a very large land use component in rural communities, as rural properties are likely to make up the bulk of cannabis growing in San Diego County. The rules you make today can favor large commercial entities whose deep pockets will enable them to plant all the acres they can buy and use all the groundwater they desire. Alternatively, these rules could favor small, mom-and-pop scale growers who will use their earnings inside the community and be an economic asset to local families and organizations. As an example of how this could be done, please review the county's tiered winery and equine ordinances.

1. Support rigorous standards for groundwater use and environmental protections.

Wasteful watering practices, such as flood irrigation, no longer have a place in Southern California. It particularly has no place in a community that depends on groundwater for 100 percent of its needs. Groundwater impacts are not confined to cannabis growing, so the best way to approach this would be through the groundwater ordinance, which is long overdue for updating.

While CLMPG does NOT advocate for metering private wells, there are other ways to ensure that crops don't use more water than necessary – mulching and direct delivery/drip, for example. Besides quantity, there is concern about groundwater pollution from agricultural fertilizers and pesticides. **We would suggest you bring the farm bureau and county groundwater team together with farmers and ranchers to discuss specific best practices initiatives that could be incorporated into a revised groundwater ordinance.**

2. Tailor growing regulations so that small growers who live in the community have the advantage over wealthy, out-of-area companies and cartels.

We have all seen, over and over, the importance of local businesses and farms to a community. They not only support the owners' families, but offer any number of additional benefits, including donations to local children's sports and charitable groups like Kiwanis, as well as other businesses, like the hardware store, gas stations and grocery stores. They tend to hire community members, helping other local families to avoid poverty. Our community plan in Campo focuses hard on local small businesses and jobs, many related to the tourist industry.

We formed our own cannabis subcommittee after learning of the 600-acre farm installed in Potrero by a Canadian CBD company. As part of our due diligence, we toured the farm after it was up and running. While we are not fundamentally opposed to the project, we were uncomfortable with the scale and water usage, and with knowing that every bit of profit from the project is going “offshore.”

This CBD farm has no land use oversight or permit. It needed only to register with the state and test for THC content. **This is not how THC farming should be done in our county. The area under cultivation should never exceed 20,000 square feet, and smaller grows should be encouraged via a tiered ordinance.**

3. Immediately commence updates to community plans so that local land use standards related to cannabis growing and marketing provide clarity for both community members and would-be growers. The recent spate of proposed county regulatory revisions has been fueled entirely from the top down, and is unlikely to promote buy-in from the people most likely to be affected. Community plans are the ONLY pieces of the general plan that are specifically intended to reform/refine regulations to address community character and needs. **If you ignore community input, you will be viewed no differently than any other elite group imposing its own pet projects onto everyone else.**

4. Permits should never be “by right.” Proponents should have to clearly demonstrate that their impact – such as odors, water usage, setbacks and wetland protections – can be controlled/mitigated. **Please require at least a conditional use permit and mitigation requirements.**

5. Children are the most vulnerable of all and their exposure should be carefully guarded against. In addition to direct security and setbacks on growing operations, they should have more community-based activities and adult guidance to divert them to better choices. **Please dedicate a minimum percentage of taxes collected from both growing operations and dispensaries directly to youth programs and facilities.**

6. Is supporting retail permit preference for convicted felons really the right approach to supporting social equity? If the goal is to improve economic prospects for historically impacted people and communities, why would you prefer that permitted sales be made by people who have already proven they will participate in illegal sales? If you must take this approach, then at least limit preferences to people with low-level possession charges and no suspicion of illegal drug sales.

People who have been comfortable **selling illegal drugs** are not misunderstood innocents. They have sold drugs to anyone with the money to buy, including children – lots of children. They have committed ancillary crimes, such as tax evasion and other financial crimes. They have done great harm to the communities you seek to support and are morally inclined to skirt the law.

We think that these communities should be treated with greater kindness than to put illegal drug dealers in control of their business environment. **Permitting should reward people**

who respect the law and care about the impacts of their activities on the community as a whole. Please consult with the communities that would be affected by this policy element before you adopt it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Billie Jo Jannen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Billie Jo Jannen, Chairman
Campo Lake Morena CPG

From: Billie Jo Jannen, Chairman, Campo Lake Morena CPG

**To: Audrey Hamilton, Land Use Environmental Planner, SDC PDS
Joel Anderson, District 2 Supervisor, San Diego County Board of Supervisors**

March 30, 2021

Re: New element, Environmental Justice, Draft Goals and Policies and Draft Implementation Plan, PDS2017-GPA-17-004

Dear Planners:

Thank you for your presentation at our March 29 meeting. Our comments are below, but first, we have a request.

Staff's recent approach to formal planning/sponsor group comments on various projects has been to paraphrase them here and there in staff's comments. This doesn't do justice to the effort and research that community advisory groups put into fully and fairly representing the views of their communities. Please return to the practice of including full planning/sponsor group comments as an attachment to staff reports and project documents when they are presented to the BOS and planning commission. Decision makers are entitled to see their advisors' full, unfiltered comments.

Missing considerations in the draft element

Missing altogether is any reference at all to not **causing** environmental injustice in potentially vulnerable communities. When you target minority populations that cannot defend themselves at the ballot box to receive taxes or industry that larger/wealthier populations don't want, that is injustice.

When you deliberately exclude community input through "streamlining" of harmful projects in politically impotent communities, you promote injustice.

When you use taxpayer money to subsidize projects in communities that don't have the money or votes to resist, that is injustice.

When you use up and pollute the groundwater in politically defenseless communities that depend on it, that is injustice.

When governing bodies look the other way, and refuse to acknowledge that certain populations are vulnerable to abuse by the population at large, that is injustice.

When land use and governing policies *knowingly reduce generational wealth* in targeted communities, regardless of skin color, that is injustice.

All of these things are being routinely done to the rural minority in SDC for exactly the same reasons they were done to racial minority communities. It is hypocritical to say we must fix injustice, while deliberately committing it in rural communities.

1. Areas at risk of environmental injustice impacts should be identified, mapped and monitored under this element. Developers should not be given a streamlining pass on the impacts their projects will have on health and property values in their host communities.

2. Adopt a policy of “first do no harm.” Communities who are at risk of environmental injustice through county policies should be protected from egregious harm brought about by county policies. **This should be stated clearly in the mission/goals statement of this new general plan element, and review/identification of at-risk communities should be conducted periodically.**

3. Acknowledge specifically that rural communities in the backcountry are not only rich in disadvantaged racial minorities (37 percent) – primarily Hispanic and Native American – but in disadvantaged low-income families in general. It should be quite alarming to us all that *over 27 percent of Campo adults in their prime earning years have incomes below the national poverty standard*. PDS has dismissed and muscled past these arguments in the past, and this needs to change with new leadership. It is hypocritical in the extreme to address ONLY past mistakes, while brutalizing rural people who have neither the votes nor the money to defend themselves.

<https://www.city-data.com/poverty/poverty-Campo-California.html>

<https://statisticalatlas.com/school-district/California/Mountain-Empire-Unified-School-District/Race-and-Ethnicity>

Financial Mitigation in Disadvantaged Communities

The entire EJ focuses on feel-good gifts we can give to the four communities listed, but new libraries and parks offer nothing that would address the ingrained problems of financial literacy and impaired generational wealth. Without the latter, nobody gets ahead no matter how many parks and grocery stores you add.

Our country’s first attempt to correct social injustice was to give freed slaves the wherewithal to make a life – the proverbial 40 acres and a mule. If this had worked as intended, black families would have developed the generational wealth to avoid many of the problems we face today. Instead, many of those families were cheated out of that gift or simply made poor decisions in managing it. Both were due to lack of financial and legal literacy, and that was the chief failing of that original investment.

When people don’t have a lot to begin with, they are less likely to see the value of financial literacy, and generationally speaking, don’t have that knowledge to pass on. Without it, they don’t know, for example, the pitfalls of buying and selling real estate, managing a business, budgeting to save, how to invest successfully, how to find advantageous elements of the tax code, or structuring end-of-life plans to benefit their children. Without financial literacy and generational wealth, poorer people of every color will fail to gain ground, libraries and parks notwithstanding.

1. Improve teaching of family financial management in local high schools, as well as how to navigate the challenges of starting a business. The latter is ignored altogether in public education, in favor of teaching people they can only ever hope to work for someone else. More business equals more jobs, and business ownership invariably creates generational wealth.

2. Fund business facilitation store fronts in as many communities as possible. These programs have been wildly successful in minority and rural communities with free services to help inexperienced

people to set up new businesses by assisting with business plans, incorporation, recordkeeping and pitfalls.

<https://managingwholes.com/ef-oregon.htm/>

https://www.lagrandeobserver.com/business/former-wallowa-county-business-owner-changes-sides/article_68f5de30-e07e-5486-ac42-51b9e23bd9d7.html

3. Find a way to replace the ROP programs that have disappeared from high school and college campuses. These programs have historically provided a tremendous benefit to financially challenged teens and young adults by teaching basic skills in everything from bookkeeping and data management to construction and auto mechanics. The loss of these programs has been a terrible one for young adults.

Groundwater

Your plan mentions groundwater in urban communities that will probably never use it. In fact, *any* community that has polluted groundwater should have it cleaned up, *especially* communities that have no other source of water. And *any* community faced with a potential threat to quality or quantity should have that threat addressed with more than just lip service.

1. Update the rainfall map that governs the size of projects. It has not been updated for 20 years (circa 2001), and in that time, we have not clocked anywhere near the 30-year rainfall averages quoted in that document. It is dangerously outdated and should be revisited immediately to curtail harm to local families and habitat.

2. Update the county groundwater ordinance. Among the changes that should be made is the level of underground water to which a developer can legally deplete it. That level is well below what would kill oak trees and other important habitat plants, as well as causing wetlands and other people's wells to dry up, at a cost of \$5,000 or more to re-drill. *Is it just to allow wealthy industrial scale users to come in and force struggling families to mortgage their homes in order to have water?* This is a harmful remnant of past PDS management and should be corrected immediately.

3. Consider requiring new industrial scale agriculture, such as outsized hemp farms, to do water studies, and please put some teeth into groundwater usage limits for construction of big projects like industrial scale renewables.

Carbon sequestration and releases

Your plan stresses the importance of carbon sequestration – and it IS important. Urban greenbelting is a great start, but soil sequestration in rural communities is never even assessed before renewable energy and housing developers are allowed to destroy it permanently. Millions of tons of GHGs are released from both the soil and plant cover, and *this will never be sequestered again on lands sacrificed to renewables and housing*. Past practice in PDS is to ignore sequestration altogether, with the excuse that the science is “too new.” CLMPG has been bringing it up for almost **20 years**. How old does the science have to be? We hope that new management in PDS will be more conscientious about focusing on the science – even if they don't like what the science says.

1. Require full assessment on all large projects, including sequestration, construction releases from concrete, earthmoving, transport and fabrication, and the very real impacts of rare earths mining and processing and metals mining and smelting. Everyone just assumes that they are better because they

don't burn fuel to operate. Nobody has any numbers to support that assumption – and frankly, assumption is an unacceptable tool in environmental assessment. The total greenhouse gas cost of renewable projects should be honestly weighed against the GHG benefit, and against generation by clean burning fuels like natural gas.

Distributed generation is undervalued in the goals and policies produced so far

On-site solar power is truly the people's power, yet your plan says nothing about promoting lower power bills by helping lower income people to free themselves from the shackles of brutal rate increases by SDG&E. Distributed generation in urban communities is often dismissed in county calculations, but home and factory rooftop solar, solar parking lot covers, and solar powered street and traffic lights are just the low-hanging fruit of distributed generation. Better yet, distributed generation makes use of space that is already impacted, reducing the need to destroy habitat, agriculture and other people's towns with industrial installations.

1. Expand/continue the county's support of private-party solar installations with quick, affordable permitting and access to solar lending.
2. Find a way to make solar borrowing more affordable. 8.25 percent is usurious and is a very real cost bar to low income families using this option.
3. Promote changing the restricted ability of HERO borrowers to pay the loan off early. Currently, you must pay at least \$2500 at a time to reduce principal owed. If you come into \$1000 and want to reduce your principal with it, it will be refused under the terms of the HERO loan. As written, it forces people to remain indebted for the full period of the loan and the lucky lender gets 8.25 percent on that the whole time.
4. Currently, if you are building your solar array as an owner/builder, you can only get a HERO loan if you first pay for the whole installation up front. This creates another barrier for people of modest incomes – or drives them to the outrageous prices charged by predatory installers and leasing companies who DO have the up-front money for construction. Create/encourage interim financing programs similar to the construction loans used to build/remodel a home.
5. Provide avenues and guidance for low-income communities to achieve partial, or even total, energy generation. Why couldn't a small community or neighborhood become its own microgrid during power outages?

Again, thank you for your time, and for making an honest effort to answer our questions. You were very helpful.

Sincerely



Billie Jo Jannen

Setting the Record Straight: Fact-Checking Claims About California’s Legal Cannabis Industry

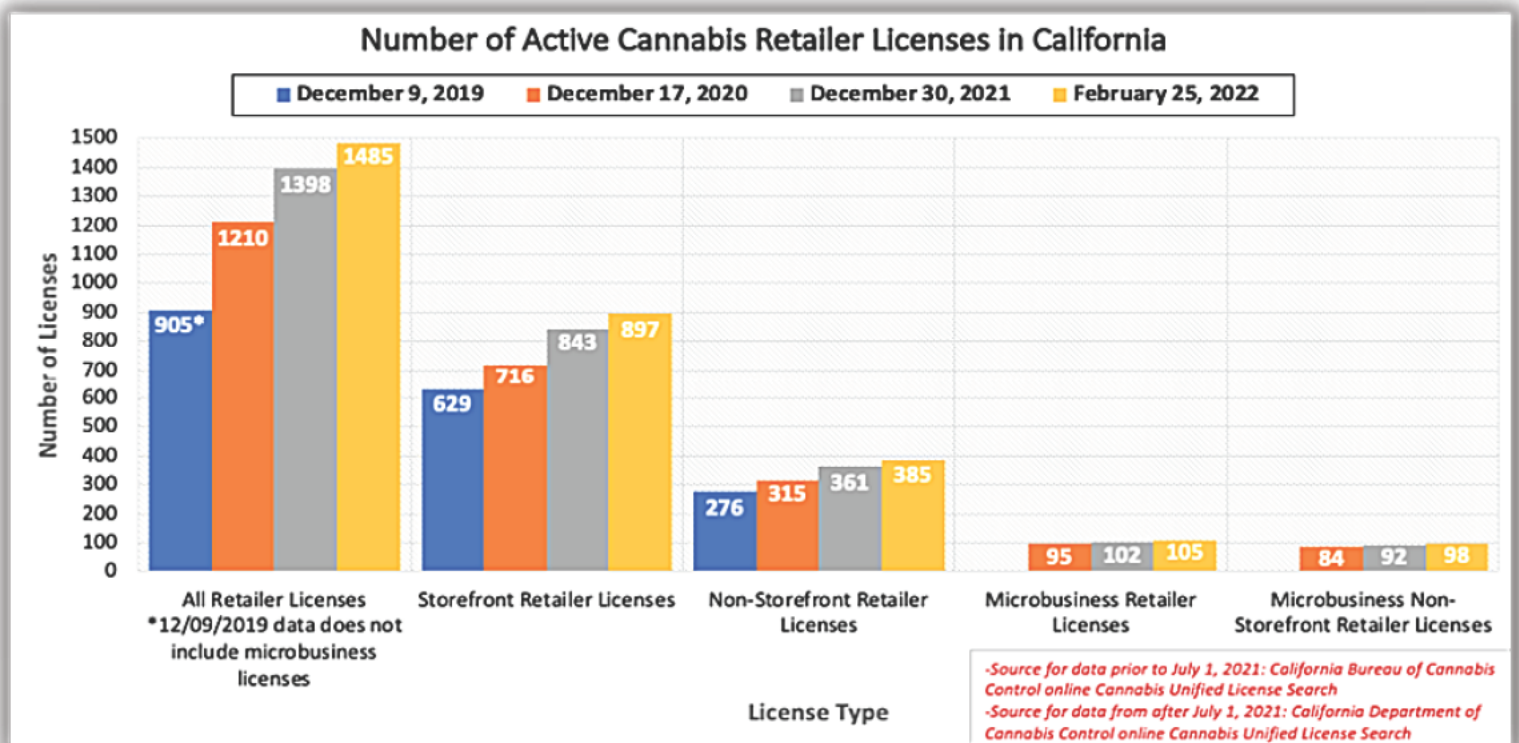


Since late 2021, the California cannabis industry has stepped up its lobbying hard for reduced taxes and regulation. To support that goal, they have disseminated information that does not align with what the Public Health Institute’s (PHI) independent research demonstrates. This fact-check analyzes examples of claims appearing in the press.

PHI’s research on this issue is supported by the National Institutes of Health and the University of California and tracks local laws, cannabis licenses, and market data.

Fiction: “And yet, today, there are fewer licensed retail outlets in the state than there were in 2015;” ¹

Fact: The state’s legal cannabis retail infrastructure has been expanding steadily, reaching 1,485 retailers in February 2022. ^{2,3}

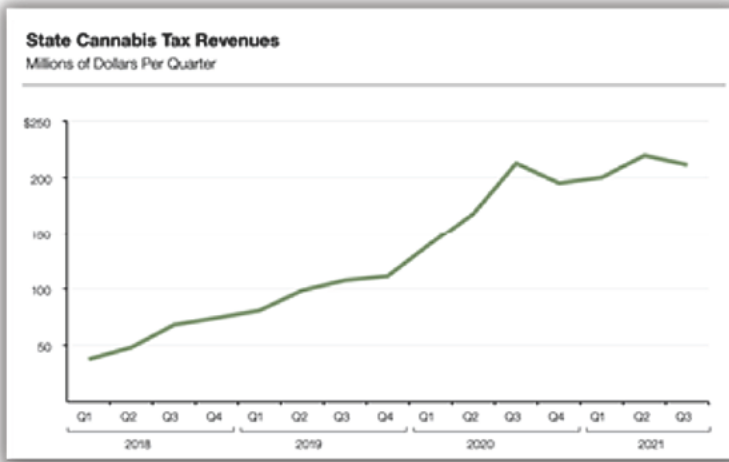


The state did not license retail cannabis outlets in 2015, so there is no accurate data on how many retail cannabis outlets there were in 2015.

Setting the Record Straight: Fact-Checking Claims About California's Legal Cannabis Industry

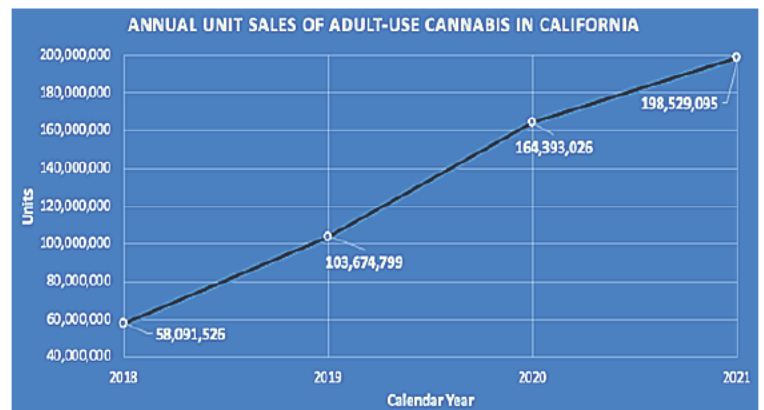
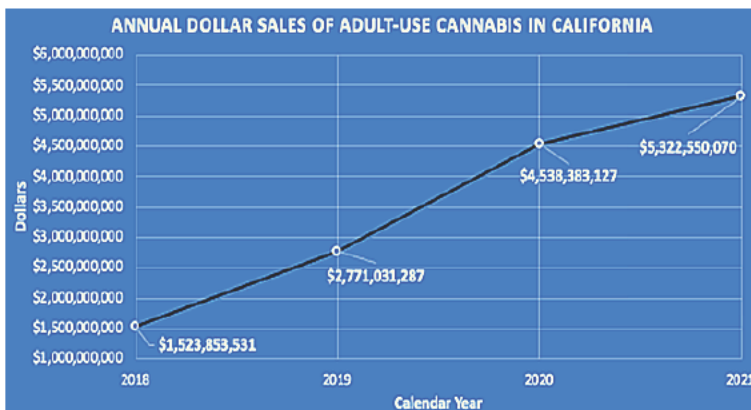
Fiction: "Legal cannabis sales are declining, and an emboldened illicit market is growing."¹

Fact: The legal cannabis market in California is thriving. Dollar sales on the legal market are rising steadily and increased by 249% between implementation of Proposition 64 in 2018 and 2021.^{4, 5}



- Both dollar sales and unit sales of adult-use cannabis steadily increased since the implementation of Proposition 64 in 2018.
- Data from LAO on overall tax revenues and data from cannabis commercial retail market tracking provide consistent results.
- While there is no way to know exactly how large California's illicit cannabis market is, most experts do agree it has been growing despite a growing legal market.
- The California illicit market is driven largely by vast overproduction, much of it for export, which will not be solved reducing taxation or regulation, or failing to protect public health in regulation of the legal market. Increasing in-state consumption is also not a socially desirable solution.

California Legal Cannabis Sales in Dollars and Units 2019-2021⁴



Setting the Record Straight: Fact-Checking Claims About California's Legal Cannabis Industry

Fiction: "Despite popular approval of Prop. 64, only 85 of the state's 500 municipalities allow retail cannabis sales." ¹

Fact: A total of 281 of California's 539 cities and counties, or ~52%, allow retail cannabis sales of either at storefronts and/or by delivery, and 60% of California residents reside in these jurisdictions. ^{6,7}

- As of 01/01/2021, 173 jurisdictions in California allowed storefront retail sales of cannabis, many of which also allow delivery sales. An additional 108 jurisdictions in California allowed retail sales of cannabis by delivery only.

Fiction: "Today there are a mere 800 or so licensed cannabis retailers in the state. That means California has just two legal dispensaries for every 100,000 residents while other long-established recreational markets (Oregon and Colorado) have 7 to 9 times that many." ¹

Fact: There are now 1,485 licensed retailers in the state for a ratio of 1:26,422 residents, higher if considering only areas which allow legal sale. We recommend that ratio not exceed 1:15,000-20,000 inhabitants. ^{3,6,7}

- As of 02/25/2022 there were 897 active licensed storefront cannabis retailers and 385 active licensed non-storefront (delivery) cannabis retailers in California. There were also 105 active microbusiness licenses permitted to conduct storefront cannabis retail sales and 98 active microbusiness licenses permitted to only conduct non-storefront cannabis retail sales in California, for a total of 1,485 retailers.
- Based on the most recent US Census data, California's population in July 2021 was estimated to be 39,237,836. Divided by 1485 licensed storefront and non-storefront retailers, that is 1 legal cannabis retailer per ~26,422 residents.

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Psychosis, Addiction, Chronic Vomiting: As Weed Becomes More Potent, Teens Are Getting Sick

With THC levels close to 100 percent, today's cannabis products are making some teenagers highly dependent and dangerously ill.

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Dabbing, a method of inhaling highly concentrated THC, has become increasingly popular among teenagers. Credit...Michelle Groskopf for The New York Times



By [Christina Caron](#)

June 23, 2022

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Elysse was 14 when she first started vaping cannabis.

It didn't smell, which made it easy to hide from her parents. And it was convenient — just press a button and inhale. After the second or third try, she was hooked.

“It was insane. Insane euphoria,” said Elysse, now 18, whose last name is being withheld to protect her privacy. “Everything was moving slowly. I got super hungry. Everything was hilarious.”

But the euphoria eventually morphed into something more disturbing. Sometimes the marijuana would make Elysse feel more anxious, or sad. Another time she passed out in the shower, only to wake up half an hour later.

This was not your average weed. The oil and waxes she bought from dealers were typically about 90 percent THC, the psychoactive component in marijuana. But because these products were derived from cannabis, and nearly everyone she knew was using them, she assumed they were relatively safe. She began vaping multiple times per day. Her parents didn't find out until about one year later, in 2019.

“We got her in a program to help her with it. We tried tough love, we tried everything, to be honest with you,” Elysse's father said of her addiction.

Starting in 2020 she began having mysterious bouts of illness where she would throw up over and over again. At first she and her parents — and even her doctors — were baffled. During one episode, Elysse said, she threw up in a mall bathroom for an hour. “I felt like my body was levitating.”

Another time she estimated that she threw up at least 20 times in the span of two hours.

It wasn't until 2021, after a half dozen trips to the emergency room for stomach illness, including some hospital stays, that a gastroenterologist diagnosed her with cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome, a condition that causes recurrent vomiting in heavy marijuana users.

Although recreational cannabis is illegal in the United States for those under 21, it has become [more accessible](#) as many states have legalized it. But experts say today's high-THC cannabis products — vastly different than the joints smoked decades ago — are poisoning some heavy users, including teenagers.

Editors' Picks

Marijuana is not as dangerous as a drug like [fentanyl](#), but it can have potentially [harmful](#) effects — especially for young people, whose brains are still developing. In addition to uncontrollable vomiting and addiction, adolescents who frequently use high doses of cannabis may also experience psychosis that could possibly lead to [a lifelong psychiatric](#) disorder, an [increased likelihood](#) of developing depression and [suicidal ideation](#), changes in brain anatomy and connectivity and poor memory.

But despite these dangers, the potency of the products currently on the market is largely unregulated.

‘I felt so trapped.’

[In 1995](#), the average concentration of THC in cannabis samples seized by the Drug Enforcement Administration was about 4 percent. By 2017, it was [17 percent](#). And now cannabis manufacturers are extracting THC to make oils; edibles; wax; sugar-size crystals; and glass-like products called shatter that advertise high THC levels in some cases exceeding 95 percent.

Meanwhile, the average level of CBD — the nonintoxicating compound from the cannabis plant tied to relief from seizures, pain, anxiety and inflammation — has been [on the decline](#) in cannabis plants. Studies suggest that lower levels of CBD can potentially make cannabis [more addictive](#).

THC concentrates “are as close to the cannabis plant as strawberries are to frosted strawberry pop tarts,” Beatriz Carlini, a research scientist at the University of Washington’s Addictions, Drug and Alcohol Institute, wrote in a [report](#) on the health risks of highly concentrated cannabis.

Although cannabis is legal for recreational use in [19 states and Washington, D.C.](#), and for medical use in [37 states](#) and D.C., only [Vermont](#) and [Connecticut](#) have imposed caps on THC concentration. Both ban concentrates above 60 percent, with the exception of pre-filled cartridges, and do not permit cannabis plant material to exceed 30 percent THC. But there is little evidence to suggest these specific levels are somehow safer.

“In general, we do not support arbitrary limits on potency as long as products are properly tested and labeled,” Bethany Moore, a spokeswoman for the National Cannabis Industry Association, said in a statement. She added that the best way to keep marijuana away from teens is to implement laws that allow the cannabis industry to replace illegal markets, which do not adhere to age restrictions, state-mandated testing or labeling guidelines.

The Food and Drug Administration has [sent warnings](#) about various cannabis products, including edibles, but so far federal regulators haven’t taken action to curb potency levels because cannabis is federally illegal, said Gillian Schauer, the executive director of the Cannabis Regulators Association, a nonpartisan nonprofit organization that convenes government officials involved in cannabis regulation across more than 40 states and territories.

California lawmakers are now considering adding [a mental health warning label](#) to cannabis products specifying that the drug may contribute to psychotic disorders.

National surveys suggest that marijuana use among 8th, 10th and 12th graders [decreased in 2021](#), a change partly attributed to the pandemic. However, over the two-year interval from 2017 to 2019, the number of kids who reported vaping marijuana over the last 30 days [rose among all grades](#), nearly [tripling](#) among high school seniors. In 2020, 35 percent of seniors, and as many as [44 percent](#) of college students, reported using marijuana in the past year.

Elyse got sober before entering college but soon found that seemingly everyone on her dorm floor habitually used weed.

“Not only carts,” she said, referring to the cannabis cartridges used in vape pens, “but bong, pipes, bowls — absolutely everything.” Each morning, she found students washing their bongs in the communal bathroom at 8 a.m. to prepare for their “morning smoke.”

After a few weeks, she began vaping concentrated THC again, she said, and also started having dark thoughts, occasionally sitting alone in her room and sobbing for hours.

“I felt so trapped,” said Elyse, who has now been clean for nearly two months. “This is not fun in any way anymore.”

Teens are particularly affected by cannabis.

Michael McDonell, an addiction treatment expert at the Washington State University college of medicine, said that more research is needed to better understand how much more prevalent psychosis and cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome have become among teenagers and others using high potency products.

Even so, he added, “we definitely know that there’s a dose-dependent relationship between THC and psychosis.”

One [rigorous study](#) found that the risk of having a psychotic disorder was five times higher among daily high potency cannabis users in Europe and Brazil than those who had never used it.

Image



A couple with cannabis vape pens. In 2020, 35 percent of high school seniors, and as many as 44 percent of college students, reported using marijuana in the past year. Credit...Michelle Groskopf for The New York Times

Another [study](#), published in 2021 in JAMA Psychiatry, reported that, in 1995, only 2 percent of schizophrenia diagnoses in Denmark were associated with marijuana use, but by 2010 that figure had risen to 6 to 8 percent, which researchers associated with increases in the use and potency of cannabis.

[Cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome](#), which can often be alleviated by [hot baths and showers](#), is [also linked](#) to prolonged, high-dose cannabis use. As with psychosis, it’s unclear why some people develop it and others do not.

Dr. Sharon Levy, the director of the Adolescent Substance Use and Addiction Program at Boston Children’s Hospital, said there is “no doubt that higher concentration products are increasing the number of people who have bad experiences with cannabis.”

When her clinic opened in 2000, marijuana was illegal in Massachusetts. At the time, Dr. Levy said far fewer kids came in with psychotic symptoms “and we almost never saw cannabis hyperemesis syndrome.”

Now, she said, those numbers are shooting up. Psychotic symptoms while high can include hallucinations, trouble distinguishing between fantasy and reality, strange behaviors (one young man would spend his days tying plastic bags into knots) or voices talking to them in their head, she added.

If a teenager displays these symptoms, getting that person off cannabis “becomes an emergency,” she said. “Because maybe, just maybe they’ll clear up, and we’re preventing someone from developing a lifelong psychiatric disorder.”

‘Oh well, it’s just weed.’

Laura Stack, who lives in Highlands Ranch, Colo., said that when her son Johnny first confessed to using marijuana at the age of 14, she said to herself, “Oh well, it’s just weed. Thank God it wasn’t cocaine.”

She had used marijuana a couple of times in high school and cautioned him that marijuana would “eat your brain cells.” But at the time she wasn’t overly concerned: “I used it, I’m fine, what’s the big deal?”

“But I had no idea,” she added, referring to how marijuana has changed in recent years. “So many parents like me are completely ignorant.”

Initially, her son did not have any mental health problems and excelled in school. But he eventually started using high potency marijuana products multiple times a day, and this, Ms. Stack said, “made him completely delusional.”

By the time he reached college, he had been through various addiction treatment programs. He had become so paranoid that he thought the mob was after him and his college was a base for the F.B.I., Ms. Stack said. At one point, after he moved out of his childhood home, he threatened to kill the family dog unless his parents gave him money. His mother later discovered that Johnny had obtained his own medical marijuana card when he turned 18 and had begun dealing to younger kids.

After several stays at mental hospitals, the doctors determined that Johnny had a severe case of THC abuse, Ms. Stack said. He was prescribed an anti-psychotic medication, which helped — but then he stopped taking it. In 2019, Johnny died after jumping from a six-story building. He was 19. A few days before his death, Ms. Stack said, Johnny had apologized to her, saying that weed had ruined his mind and his life, adding, “I’m sorry, and I love you.”

A recent study found that people who used marijuana had a [greater likelihood](#) of suicidal ideation, plan and attempt than those who did not use the drug at all. Ms. Stack now runs a nonprofit called [Johnny’s Ambassadors](#) that educates communities about high-THC cannabis and its effect on the adolescent brain.

There’s ‘no known safe limit.’

It can be difficult to pinpoint exactly how much THC enters someone’s brain when they’re using cannabis. That’s because it’s not just the frequency of use and THC concentration that affect dosage, it’s also how fast the chemicals are delivered to the brain. In vaporizers, the speed of delivery can change depending on the base the THC is dissolved in, the strength of the device’s battery and how warm the product becomes when it’s heated up.

Higher doses of THC are [more likely](#) to produce anxiety, agitation, paranoia and psychosis.

“The younger you are, the more vulnerable your brain is to developing these problems,” Dr. Levy said.

Youths are also more likely to become addicted when they start using marijuana before the age of 18, according to the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#).

Furthermore, there is [growing evidence](#) that cannabis can alter the brain during adolescence, a period when it is already undergoing structural changes. Until more is known, researchers and clinicians recommend postponing cannabis use until later in life.

“I have kids asking me all the time, ‘What if I do this just once a month, is that OK?’” Dr. Levy said. “All I can tell them is that there’s no known safe limit.”

Dr. McDonell agreed that avoiding drug use entirely is always the safest option, but said that some kids might require [a more nuanced conversation](#). He advised having open discussions about drugs with middle-schoolers and teenagers, while also educating them about the dangers of high potency cannabis products compared to those that are mostly made of CBD.

“I think that’s something we’re all struggling with as a community,” he added. “How do we get this information to parents and kids fast enough?”

Advice for Parents

More Young Kids Are Getting Sick From Cannabis Edibles

Jan. 14, 2022

How to Talk to Teens About Edibles

Oct. 19, 2021

Christina Caron is a reporter for the Well section, covering mental health and the intersection of culture and health care. Previously, she was a parenting reporter, general assignment reporter and copy editor at The Times. [@cdcaron](#)

A Mental Health Crisis Among Our Youth

Mental health issues among children and teens in the United States are on the rise. Learn more about this worrisome trend from various angles.

- **The Toll of Covid-19:** During the pandemic, the number of [children](#) and [adolescents](#) needing urgent mental health care [spiked](#).
- **Rise in Suicide Among Black Youth:** A recent study uncovered a sharp rise in suicide rates among Black youth, [especially among girls](#).
- **Prevention:** With more young people reporting suicidal thoughts, concerned parents and loved-ones [are looking for ways to help](#). [Here are some suggestions](#).
- **Advocacy Efforts:** To contain the crisis, teens [are organizing to improve the mental health services](#) available to them.
- **The Suicide Website:** An online platform providing directions on how to die [is linked to a trail of deaths](#) among young people, a Times investigation found.