



Cannabis Fireside Chat

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Director

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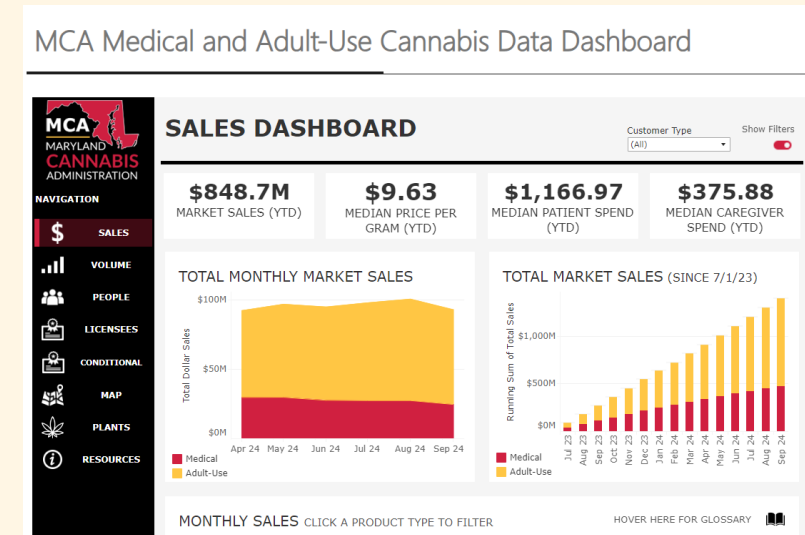
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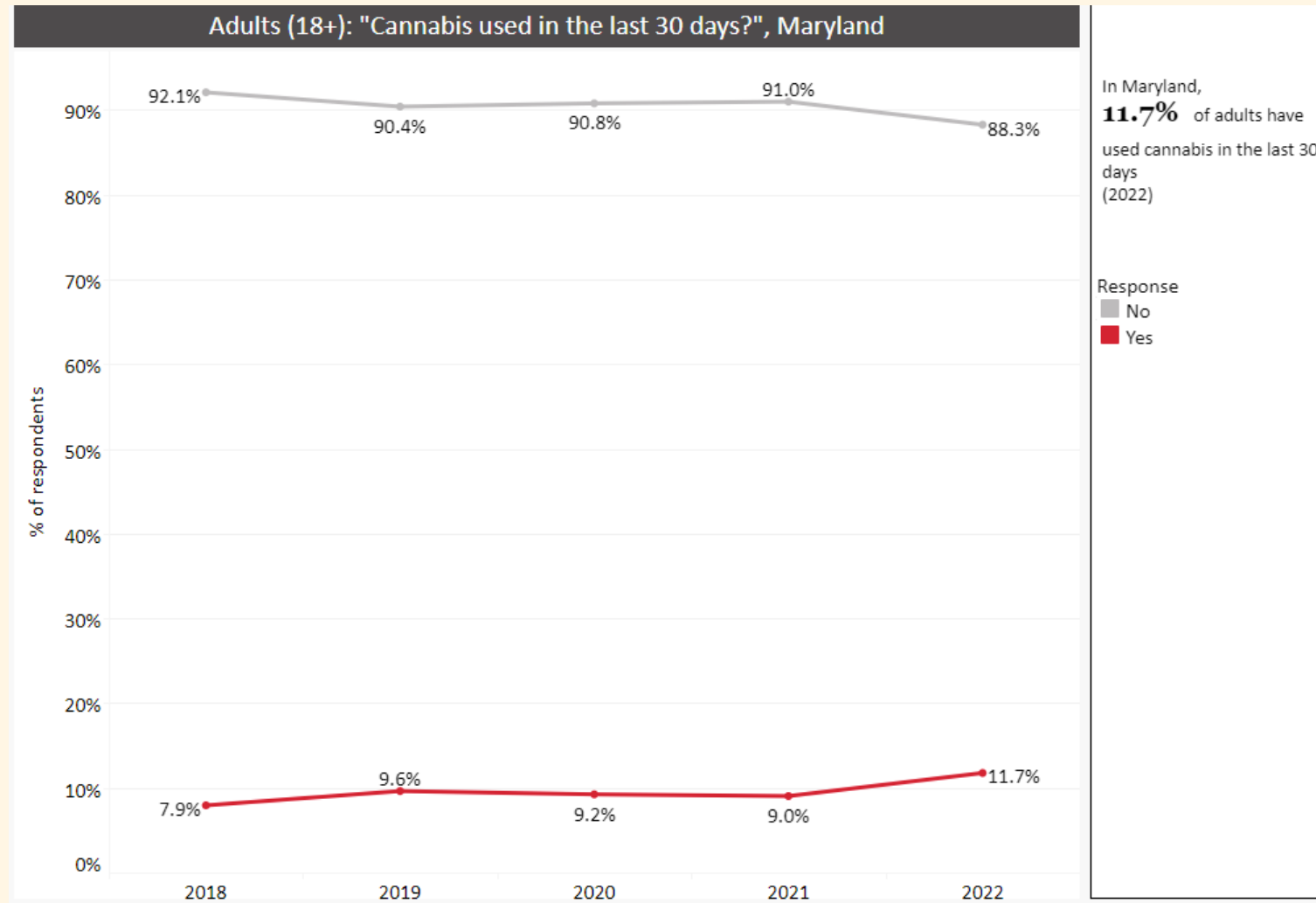
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Cannabis in Maryland

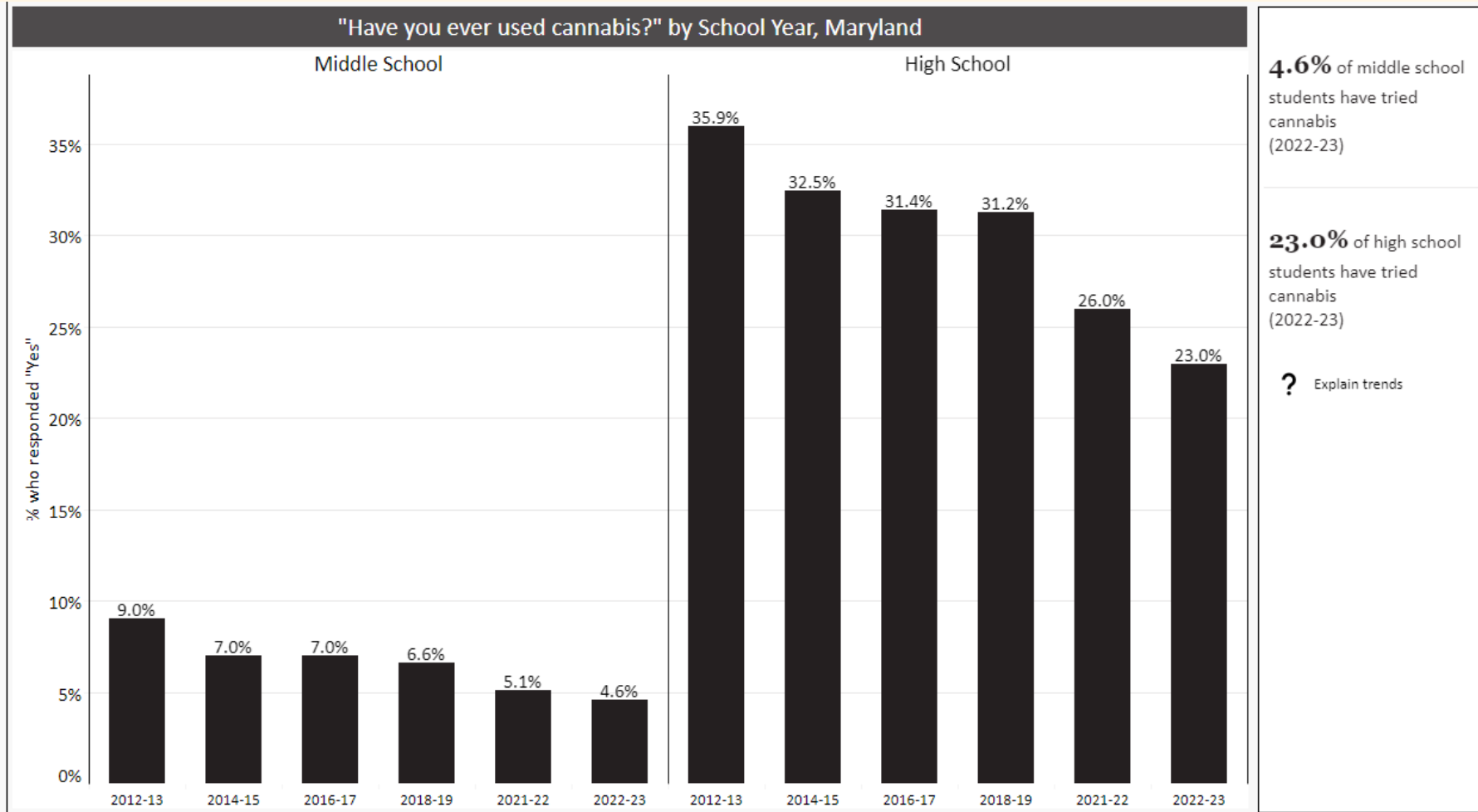
- Legalized Medical Cannabis in 2014 and first medical dispensaries opened in December of 2017.
- Adult-Use cannabis became legal in July of 2023.
- The Maryland Cannabis Administration regulates the Cannabis Market
- [MCA Medical and Adult-Use Cannabis Data Dashboard](#)
 - State currently has 98 dispensaries that serve both medical and adult-use customers.
 - \$259.8 million in Medical Sales (YTD).
 - \$588.9 million in Adult-Use sales (YTD)
 - 73 new standard dispensaries licenses were issued, and business are being stood up.
 - Currently 108,084 registered medical cannabis patients.



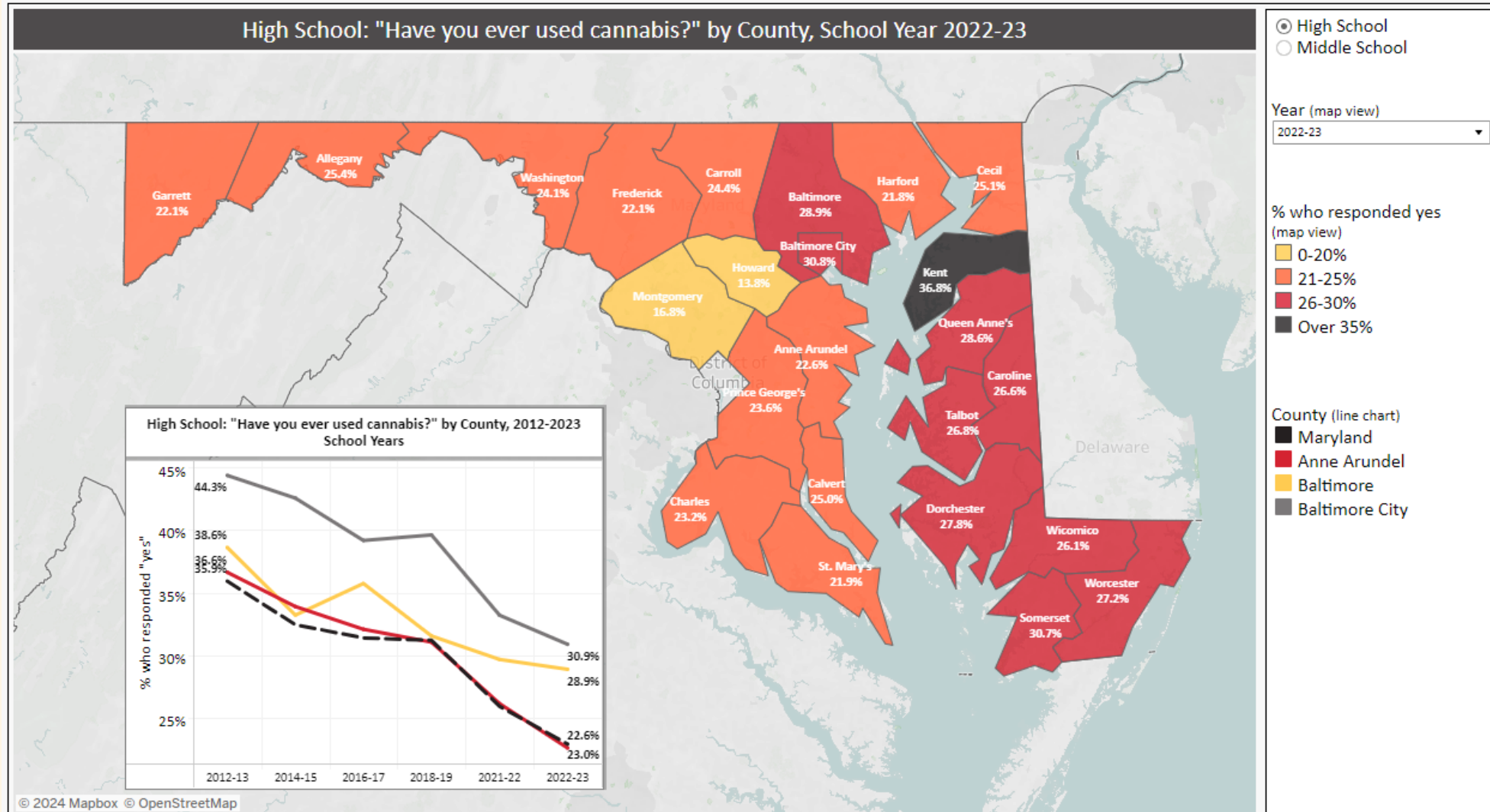
Cannabis Use in Maryland Adults (Draft Data from BRFSS)



Cannabis Use in Maryland Youth (Draft Data from YRBS)



Youth Use by County (Draft Data from YRBS)



Maryland's Public Health Concerns with Legalization

- Legal Resource Center conducted a Cannabis Community Needs Assessment (CNA).
- Sent to all local health officers in April 2024.
- Received responses from all 24 LHD
- The assessment asked 4 main questions:
 - What public health concerns do you have?
 - What public health issues are you currently facing with cannabis legalization?
 - What efforts are you undertaking to address public health issues posed by cannabis legalization?
 - What barriers are there to addressing public health issues related to cannabis legalization?
- Takeaways from CNA.
 - Greatest concern over (1) youth Use, (2) cannabis impaired driving, and (3) cannabis use during pregnancy and breastfeeding.
 - Greatest challenge are change in risk perception, lack of information and research, and lack of funding and resources.

Short-Term Health Effects of Cannabis

- Changes in mood
- Impaired body movement
- Difficulty with thinking and problem-solving
- Impaired memory
- Breathing problems
- Increased heart rate
- Intense nausea and vomiting (cannabis hyperemesis syndrome)
- Hallucinations and delusions (when taken in high doses)
- Psychosis (highest risk with regular use of high potency products, or in people predisposed to psychosis)

Cannabis Risk for Vulnerable Populations

[Pregnant and Breastfeeding Individuals](#) (MCA BeCannabisSmart Information)

- There is no amount of cannabis use that's known to be safe in pregnancy or while breastfeeding.
- If you use cannabis, you may be putting your health and your baby's health at risk. This includes smoking, eating, and vaping cannabis.
- Tetrahydrocannabinol or THC — the part of cannabis that makes you feel high — passes to your baby during pregnancy and breastfeeding.
- More research is needed, but babies exposed to THC may have problems feeding and long-term problems paying attention and learning.
- THC can stay in breast milk for several weeks. “Pumping and Dumping” does not work.
- Cannabis can also impair your judgment, alertness, and reaction time as a parent. You need these skills to safely care for your child.
- If a healthcare practitioner detects that a newborn has been exposed to cannabis, they are required to report the parent to the local department of human services.

Cannabis Risk for Vulnerable Populations

[Youth Cannabis Use \(MCA BeCannabisSmart Information\)](#)

- THC acts directly on the brain, which continues to develop until about age 25. Regular cannabis use during teen years and early adulthood may harm memory, learning, and attention — and effects may be long term.
- Frequent cannabis use during youth and adolescence has been linked with worse mental health symptoms such as depression and anxiety as well as an increased risk of addiction



Driving Under the Influence of Cannabis

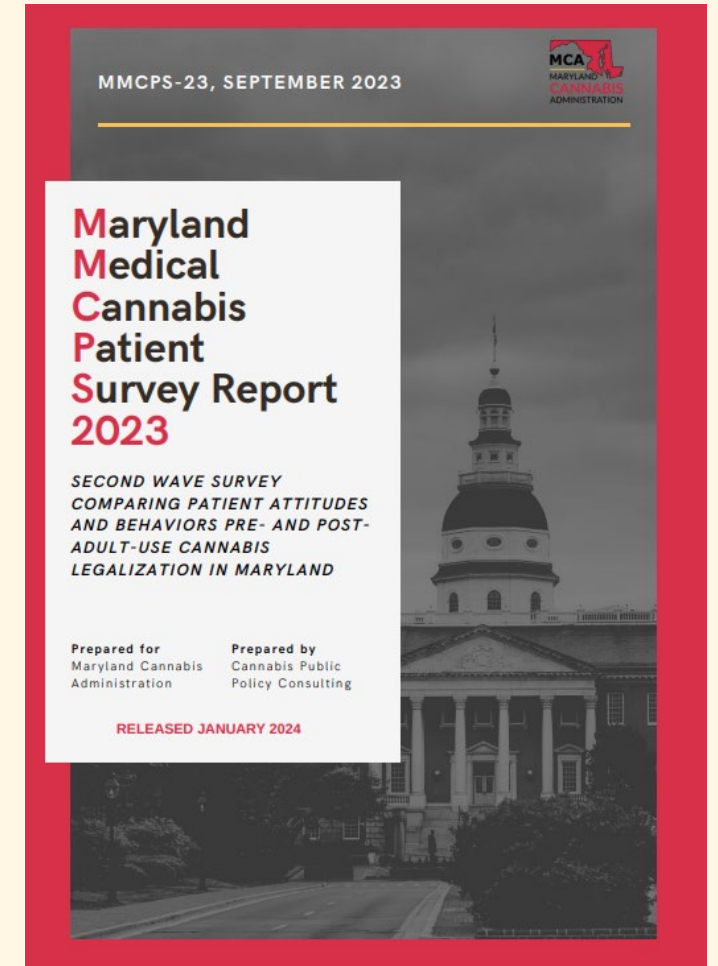
- Cannabis use slows reaction time, impairs coordination, and distorts an individual's perception, each of which increases the likelihood of a dangerous collision while driving.
- Under Maryland law
 - A person may not drive any vehicle while impaired by any drug, including cannabis.
 - A driver may not consume cannabis inside a motor vehicle, either driving or parked (\$500). A passenger may not smoke cannabis inside a motor vehicle (\$25).
- Research is divided on the impact of cannabis legalization on cannabis impaired driving.
- Unlike alcohol, there is no universally-accepted chemical test that can indicate current level of cannabis impairment.
 - THC tests can indicate cannabis consumption, but do not indicate how long-ago consumption occurred or whether the driver is currently impaired.
 - Officers are instead reliant upon field evaluation of the driver's capacity to drive.



Changing Perceptions in Maryland

Maryland Medical Cannabis Patient Survey- A Pre/Post Legalization Comparison

- MCA surveyed over 30,000 medical patients.
- A minor increase in the frequency of use from 21.3 days to 22.1 days a month.
- Increase in cannabis use while pregnant and/or breastfeeding from 56% to 75%.
- Percent of patients who drove under the influence of cannabis in the last month increased from 18% to 39%.
- Patients who reported always storing their medical cannabis in a safe, locked location decreased from 62% to 54%.



The Future: Potential Changes in Federal Law

Rescheduling Cannabis from Schedule I to Schedule III

- DHHS letter recommended rescheduling - accepted medical use and less potential for abuse.
- DEA Proposed regulation received 43,564 public comments.
- Administrative hearing on December 2, 2024.
- What changes if cannabis becomes Schedule III?
 - Fewer restrictions on plant touching cannabis research.
 - Cannabis businesses can take advantage of U.S. tax code-business expense deductions.
 - Public perception of cannabis's risks and benefits.
- What won't change
 - The cannabis and cannabis products sold in regulated state markets will still be illegal under federal law.
 - Maryland's laws will mostly remain unchanged.



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Thank you

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