

Youth and Young Adult Marijuana Use In Rhode Island



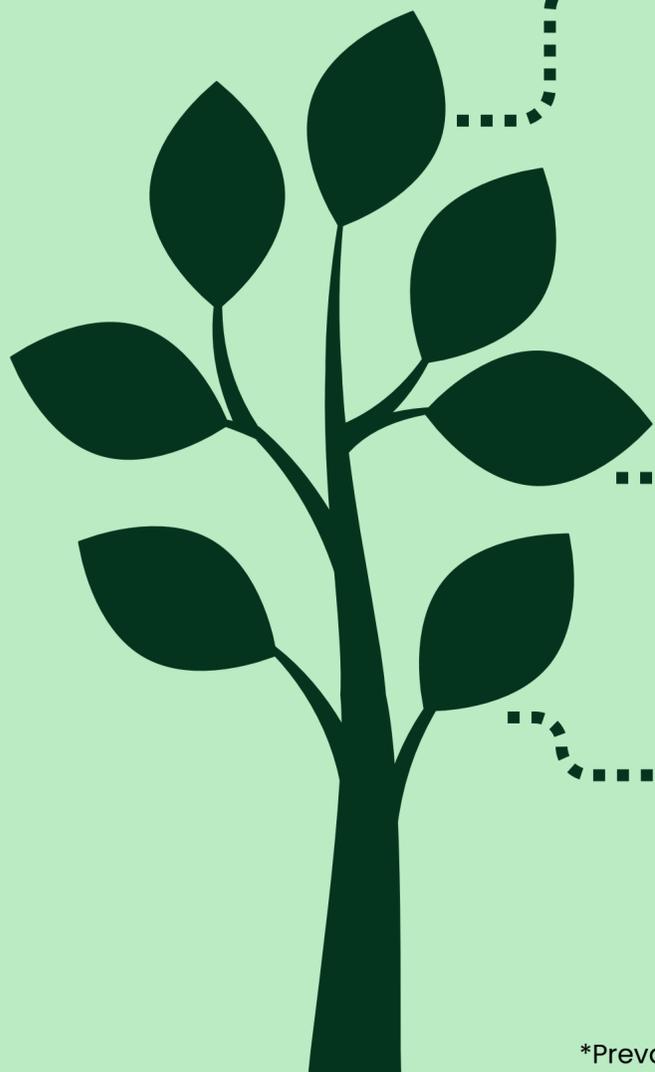
September 2023

This brief uses both terms cannabis and marijuana. It is important to recognize and condemn the racist intentions with which the term “marijuana” was popularized. The term cannabis is more scientifically accurate and is used when appropriate. The terms in this report were selected intentionally for the most accurate communication of data based on the survey from which the data originated.

Although now legal in Rhode Island (RI), marijuana is the most commonly used illicit substance in the United States, particularly among youth (aged 12-17) and young adults (aged 18-25).¹ While cannabis can have a variety of health benefits when medically used, research indicates that using cannabis before 18 years of age may have a negative impact on brain development and other outcomes.²

Data from the 2022 Rhode Island Student Survey (RISS) and Rhode Island Young Adult Survey (RIYAS) outlines the prevalence, perceptions, and consequences of youth and young adult (YA) marijuana use in RI.

Prevalence



5% of middle school (MS) and **15%*** of high school (HS) youth reported past 30-day use of marijuana

46% of YA have ever used cannabis and **11%** met the criteria for cannabis use disorder

23%* of HS students have ever used marijuana and only **38%** believe there is risk associated with use

*Prevalence from the 2021 YRBS is slightly higher

Access and Availability

Youth and young adults reported obtaining marijuana through:

Friends and Family



Youth: **54%** obtained from a friend and **19%** from a family member for free

YA: **69%** obtained from a friend or family member

Internet



Youth: **9%** bought it on the internet

YA: **15%** obtained through social media

Driving Under the Influence

Consuming marijuana can impair a person's attention span and slow reaction time. Driving while impaired can result in automobile crashes and injuries.¹

4%
of HS youth



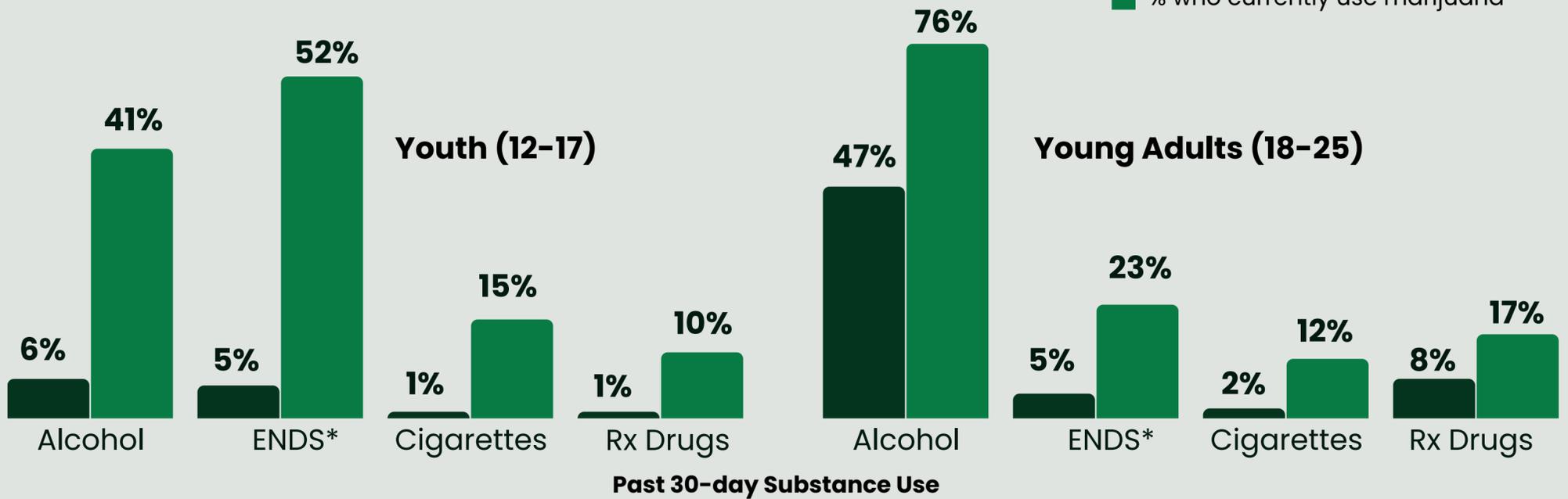
39%
of YA

report ever driving under the influence of cannabis

Alcohol and Other Drug Use

■ % who don't currently use marijuana

■ % who currently use marijuana



Youth and YA who report using marijuana in the last 30-days are more likely to also report using other substances in the last 30-days.

*Electronic nicotine delivery system devices

Academic Performance

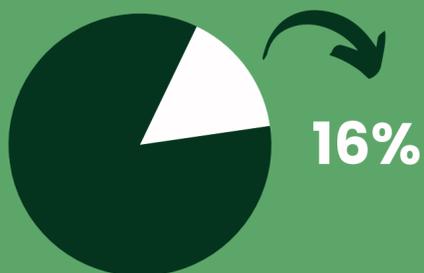
Evidence suggests that youth who use marijuana have less academic success and are less likely to finish high school or earn a college degree.¹



Among RI youth...



of those who use marijuana had grades that were mostly D's or F's compared to 8% of those who don't use marijuana



of those who use marijuana missed five or more days of school in the last month compared to 6% of those who don't use marijuana



Mental Health

Chronic marijuana use at an early age has been associated with an increased risk of depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts.²



Among RI youth...



of those who use marijuana reported feeling very sad compared to 25% of those who don't use marijuana



of those who use marijuana had difficulty concentrating on their school work compared to 34% of those who don't use marijuana

Among RI young adults...



of those who use cannabis reported depression symptoms compared to 46% of those who don't use cannabis



of those who use cannabis reported suicidal ideation compared to 11% of those who don't use cannabis

only

40%

of youth report talking to at least one parent about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco, or drug use in the last year

84%

of youth agree that their family has clear rules about drug and alcohol use

years old

17

average age of first cannabis use among YA



Prevention Starts With Parents

Young people say their parents are the leading influence on their decision of whether to use alcohol or drugs.³ Talking to your child about the consequences of cannabis and other drug use can reduce the chance your child will use and help your child make good choices.⁴

How to talk to your child about drug use:⁵



Know when to have a conversation. Choose a time and place where you and your child are comfortable and will not be interrupted. Wait until your child is sober and neither of you are angry or frustrated.



Listen to your child's opinions about drugs and answer questions they have without judgement.



Discuss the negative consequences of drug use by emphasizing how use can affect the things that are important to them (ex. sports, health, driving). Avoid scare tactics.



Set clear rules and expectations such as not riding with a driver that has been using drugs or leaving situations where drug use occurs. Include consequences for breaking the rules and enforce them when appropriate.

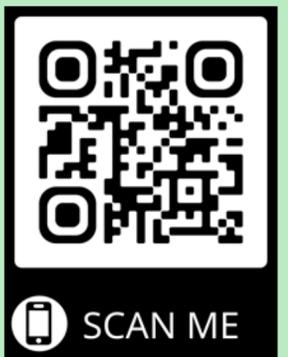
Safe Storage

In May 2022, RI became the 19th state to legalize the recreational use of marijuana for adults aged 21 and older.⁶



Legal does NOT mean safe when it comes to kids!

Help keep your underage children, siblings, and even pets out of harm's way by safely storing your marijuana and other cannabis products using a secure lock bag funded by the *Rhode Island Regional Prevention Coalitions*



To request a FREE lock bag, scan the QR code above

Data Sources:

RISS 2022: Rhode Island Student Survey is a large survey of middle and high school students.

RIYAS 2022: RIYAS: Rhode Island Young Adult Survey is a large convenience sample of Rhode Island-residing 18-25 year olds.

References:

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Endorsed by the Rhode Island State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup (SEOW)

