

# Public Health & Safety Working Group

## Act 169 Dual Use of Cannabis Task Force

October 3, 2022



# Working Group Members

- Michele Nakata – Chair, Hawaii Department of Health
  - Senator Joy San Buenaventura – Hawaii Senate District 2
  - Dr. James Ireland – City & County of Honolulu
  - Barrett Otani – County of Hawaii
  - Randy Gonce – Hawaii Cannabis Industry Association
  - Jared Redulla – Hawaii Department of Public Safety
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A magnifying glass with a black handle and a silver-colored frame is positioned over a thick stack of papers. The papers are slightly blurred, suggesting a focus on the magnifying glass. The background is dark, making the papers and the magnifying glass stand out.

## Scope of Investigation

To identify and make recommendations on policies to safeguard public and consumer health and safety, including preventing youth access, impaired driving, use disorder, and impacts to mental health.

# General Goals

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- Ensure that the Task Force, legislators, new Governor, government agencies, stakeholders, and the public have the information to make educated decisions regarding adult-use
- Protect vulnerable and at-risk populations
- Promote safe, responsible consumption behaviors in those for whom cannabis is legal



# In-home Cannabis Use

- Cannabis use among parents and caregivers of children is increasing in the US
- 34-60% of women who use cannabis before pregnancy continue using during and after pregnancy
- Use is higher in states where adult-use is legal
- Array of exposure mechanisms
  - Secondhand smoke exposure
  - Unintentional Ingestion
  - Surface accumulation of THC



A close-up photograph of a hand holding a lit cannabis cigarette. The cigarette is held between the thumb and index finger, with the tip glowing and emitting a thin stream of white smoke that rises into the air. The background is blurred, showing another hand and a cigarette in the distance.

## Second-Hand Smoke

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- Second-hand cannabis smoke:
  - Contains THC and can cause the same physical effects as direct use
  - Contains many of the same cancer-causing chemicals as tobacco smoke
- Chronic exposure during infancy or childhood can cause:
  - Neurological impairments
  - Respiratory illness and symptoms

# Pediatric Poisonings

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- Most child exposures in the US are:
  - Accidental
  - Highest among ages 1 to 3 years
  - Edibles
- Rates higher in states with legalized adult-use
- Increases in ER visits and hospitalizations
- Acute effects
  - Loss of coordination; difficulty breathing; panic and anxiety; nausea and vomiting; rapid heartbeat; tremors; hallucinations; seizures



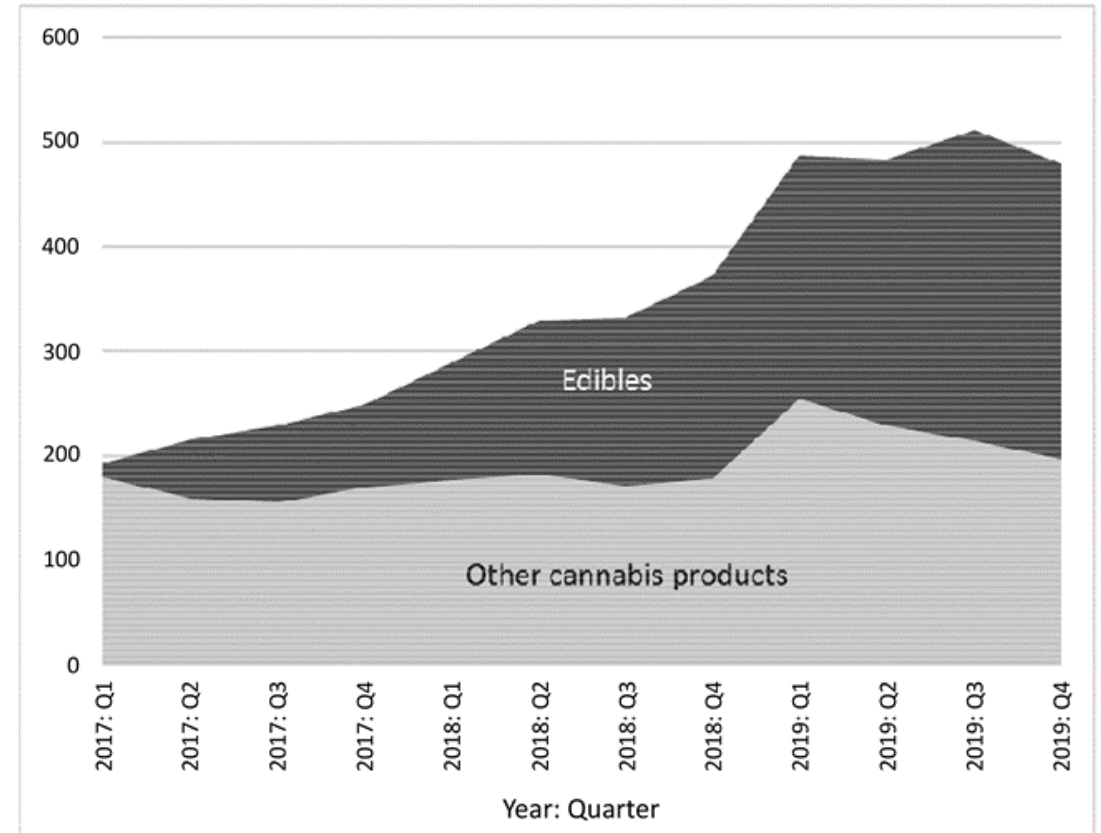
# From: Edible Cannabis Exposures Among Children: 2017-2019

Pediatrics. 2021; 147(4). doi:10.1542/peds.2020-019893

American Academy  
of Pediatrics



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# Use During Pregnancy

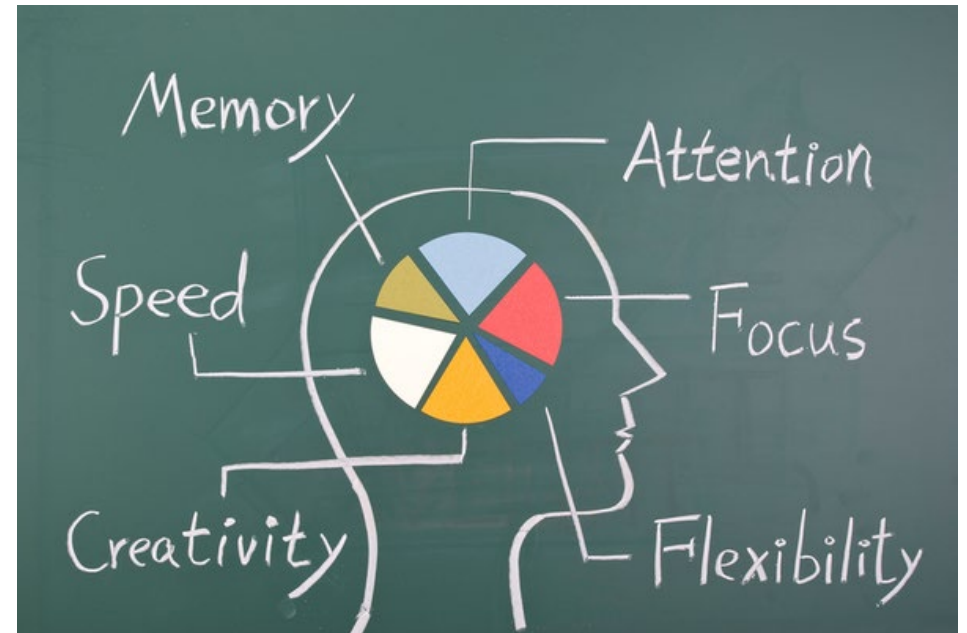
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- Studies have shown that D9-THC can cross the placenta & potentially affect brain development
- According to NSDUH, cannabis use by pregnant women increased from 3% in 2002 to 7% in 2017
- Prenatal use is associated with low birthweight and attention, social, and behavioral problems that persist into adolescence



# Youth Use

- Over 20% of high school students report “current” (past 30-day) use
- Cannabis use during adolescence & young adulthood can harm the developing brain – some of these effects may be permanent, & include:
  - Impairment of cognitive & academic abilities
  - Less likely to graduate from high school or attain a college degree
  - Increased risk of developing psychotic disorders (e.g., schizophrenia) or psychotic symptoms (e.g., hallucinations)
  - Increased risk of having suicidal thoughts or to attempt suicide



# Suicidality in Young Adults

- Data from >280,000 young adults ages 18-35 showed that cannabis use was associated with increased risks of suicidal ideation, plan, & attempt
- Even nondaily users were more likely to have suicidal ideation and to plan or attempt suicide than those who did not use the drug at all
- Risks were remained regardless of whether a person was also experiencing depression, & were greater for those with depression
- Risks were greater for women than for men

# ER Presentations – Colorado Example

Andrew A. Monte, Shelby K. Shelton, Eleanor Mills, et al; Acute Illness Associated With Cannabis Use, by Route of Exposure: An Observational Study. Ann Intern Med.2019;170:531-537

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- Studied ER visits between 2012 – 2016 (medical retail began 2009; adult-use retail 2014)
- Three-fold increase in cannabis-related ER visits (nearly 10,000 of all visits)
- Cannabinoid hyperemesis was one of the most commonly reported conditions
- Although only about 11% of the visits were the result of edibles, this was 33 times higher than expected based on the market share of edibles at that time
- Three deaths associated with edibles were reported during the study period
  - 19-year-old college student jumped from a hotel balcony after consuming 6-times the recommended amount of cannabis-infused cookies
  - A man shot & killed his wife after experiencing hallucinations from eating infused candy with a prescription medication
  - 23-year-old died by self-inflicted gunshot after ingesting high doses of edibles
- Prompted changes in packaging and labeling requirements

# Cannabis Use & Driving

- Adult-use legalization linked with an increase in motor vehicle crashes and traffic-related deaths
- Blood THC associated with impaired driving and increased risk of vehicle crash
- Disconnect between people's understanding of cannabis impacts on safe driving – only about 70% view driving within an hour of cannabis use as dangerous (vs. 95% who recognize the danger of driving while impaired by alcohol)



# Animal Poisonings

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- According to the American Kennel Club, there has been a significant increase in dogs suffering from cannabis toxicosis
- Rarely fatal, but symptoms include:
  - Stumbling
  - Lethargy
  - Urinary incontinence
  - Vomiting
  - Tremors and shaking
- Treatment is IV fluids & supportive care



# Not in My Backyard...

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**Can smoke & plant odor be considered a nuisance?**

- Private nuisance affects *“a single individual or definite small number of persons in the enjoyment of private rights not common to the public.”*
- Public nuisance is an unreasonable interference with *“a right common to the general public.”*



<https://bigbudsmag.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/residents-complain-about-cannabis-smell-legal-grow.jpg>

# Working Group Recommendations

## Adopt

Adopt APHA recommendations for monitoring & addressing cannabis-related health problems

- Protect vulnerable populations
- Minimize public harm
- Monitor patterns of use & related public health & safety outcomes

## Establish

Establish a comprehensive surveillance program to monitor cannabis use & associated impacts in Hawaii

## Convene

Convene a Public Health Advisory Committee

- Health care professionals with expertise in cannabis use & impacts of use
- Review & adjudicate scientific literature to recommend public health policies



Thank you!!!