

OVERVIEW, CONTINUED

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved two specific drugs (dronabinol (name brands Marinol and Syndros) and nabilone (name brand Cesamet)) that are synthetic forms of specific cannabinoids for use in cancer patients with chemotherapy-associated nausea and vomiting.

While marijuana has been proven to help cancer patients and other people with their pain and illness, it can also cause its own problems with health by consuming it. The most common way of consuming marijuana smoking it. Any type of smoke inhaled by the lungs can be harmful to the tissues and small blood vessels.

“Smoke from marijuana has many of the same toxins, irritants and carcinogens (cancer-causing chemicals) as tobacco smoke. Smoking marijuana can also lead to a greater risk of bronchitis, cough and mucus production, though these symptoms generally improve when marijuana smokers quit,” the CDC reported.

Along with lung problems, the consumption of marijuana

can also cause issues with the heart. The drug can make the heart beat faster and make blood pressure higher immediately after use. Consumption could also lead to the increased risk of stroke, heart disease and other vascular diseases.

However, it is hard to distinguish the difference in the effects that marijuana has on the heart versus the inhalation of the smoke being the main cause for the problem.

Often used recreationally or to treat chronic pain, marijuana has also recently been used to treat specific diseases.

One such disease is Parkinson’s disease. PD is the second most common adult onset neurodegenerative disorder in the United States. The disease is debilitating with both motor and non-motor symptoms.

Currently, there are scarce options for treating Parkinson’s and many with the disease suffer tremendously. In addition, not many treatments are known to halt its progression. By using marijuana, it has been observed to improve both motor and non-motor symptoms and control pain in Parkinson’s patients.

The Cereus Journal of Medical Science reported on a

study of the effects of marijuana on Parkinson’s disease. They stated, “Most of them consumed half a teaspoon of cannabis leaves, along with their prescribed pharmacotherapy for PD. About 46% of these individuals reported relief of PD symptoms in general, occurring at an average of 1.7 months after the first use of marijuana, suggesting chronic use of marijuana may be required for improvement in symptoms.”

While also relieving pain, THC has shown to improve both activity and hand-eye coordination, improvement of resting tremors, rigidity and posture. It has also helped Parkinson’s patients with their restless eye movement and sleep better at night.

While marijuana usage has been around for roughly 2,500 years, the study of it and specifically the medical aspect of using the drug is still a very new area. Using marijuana has many benefits such as treatment of pain, relaxation, treating diseases such as Parkinson’s, HIV/AIDS and Alzheimer’s and treating anxiety. However, it does have its downfalls such as having effects on brain development, lung and heart problems and



PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG RAPIDS PIONEER

A worker inspecting marijuana plants at a growing facility.

the overall impairing effect that marijuana has on the user.

It is highly recommended that any person considering consuming marijuana in any way do their own research. It has been shown that the drug affects each person differently

and has different effects associated with its use each time it is consumed. It is also advised to users that, unless obtaining a medical marijuana prescription, it is illegal for recreational use in many states. Medical marijuana is an

ever increasing drug worldwide and will further continue to be studied. Even more aspects of using marijuana, recreationally or medically, is still to be discovered.

PETITIONS, CONTINUED

Cannabis sales would be subject to an 8% marijuana tax on top of state sales tax.

“We’re trying to free the plant and free the people, because we don’t believe it is a dangerous substance,” said Briana Boling, spokesperson for Arkansas True Grass.

Petitioners from the various organizations work across the state. Some have even been sent to Arkansas State University.

In the March 2 edition of the Herald, it was reported that two paid petitioners from the company Advanced Micro Targeting came to campus on Feb. 28 in an attempt to gather signatures.

The petitioners, Carissa McNamee and Aaron Klemmer, traveled to highly trafficked locations across Jonesboro and

Paragould, working toward the 89,151 signature goal. At the time of the Herald’s report, they had gathered around 1,000 signatures.

“I’ve seen a lot of people do worse things that are legal, such as alcohol. I just don’t see the point in this, we’re losing a lot of money as a state,” Klemmer said.

Responsible Growth Arkansas reported they have collected 35,000 signatures. Arkansas True Grass said they had over 35,000, but plan to have a full signature count by the end of May.

Boling said despite large public support, part of the reason for the difficulty for passing recreational marijuana laws is due to the medical marijuana industry’s control on the market.

“They’re locking it down to where they’ll be the only ones able to make money and at that

rate, they can sell a poor quality product for a high dollar,” Boling said. “You can expect to pay anywhere from \$25 on the low end and \$50-60 on the high end for an eighth of an ounce. That’s ridiculous and it’s not right.”

Boling added that some dispensaries have not allowed True Grass Arkansas petitioners to collect signatures on their properties. She also said some people have refused to back the movement financially because they were too heavily invested in the medical marijuana field.

Despite the fact there are five separate recreational marijuana ballots, the signatures collected cannot be combined into one large initiative. If more than one proposal were to appear on the ballot, the one with the most votes would become law.

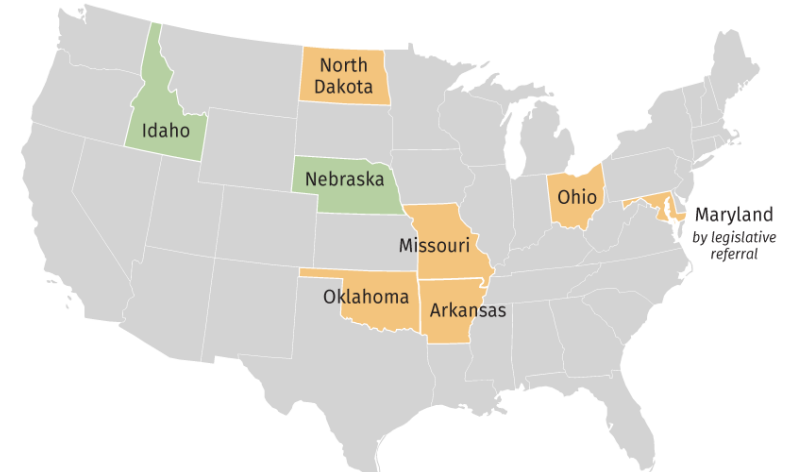
Legalization via the Ballot Box in 2022

Voters in more than a half-dozen states could see recreational or medical marijuana legalization initiatives on the ballot in November.

Potential initiatives

States with potential ballot initiatives in 2022.

■ Medical ■ Recreational



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF MJBIZ DAILY

States with potential ballot initiatives in 2022. Arkansas legalized medical marijuana in 2016, but now five different petitioning organizations are attempting to collect enough signatures to place recreational marijuana on the ballot.

Knockoff THC products mimic popular snack products aimed at children

Original story by Sandee LaMotte of CNN.

A study released Tuesday in the journal Drug and Alcohol Dependence examined packaging that mimicked popular snack products such as Nerds and Doritos.

The products contain anywhere from 500-600 milligrams of THC, or tetrahydrocannabinol, which is the part of the plant that causes people to get high.

The packaging is nearly identical to products commonly consumed by children, despite the fact the contents inside are meant for adults.

This has raised some concern that children will get ahold of these packages and consume potentially dangerous amounts of THC.

“The Nerd Rope knockoffs I have personally seen looked just like the licensed product,” said Danielle Ompad, an associate

professor of epidemiology at New York University School of Global Public Health and senior author of the study. “The (knockoff) Doritos were shaped just like the real thing and had a crunch as well.”

Ompad said 500-600 milligrams of THC is a large dose, even for an adult. She added that people who consume edibles for recreation typically don’t consume over 10 milligrams.

These products have no listed manufacturer on their packaging. Ompad said it was relatively easy for small businesses to buy empty knockoff bags, as they can be purchased online in bulk.

“The reputable business people in cannabis do not engage in this kind of conduct,” said Henry Wykowski, legal counsel for the National Cannabis Industry Association. “There are other people

that are still operating in the illicit market and they aren’t following the rules.”

Major candy and chip manufacturers such as Mars Wrigley, Hershey Company, Mondelez Canada and Ferrara Candy Company have begun to take legal action against the knockoff companies.

Ompad said young children could be especially susceptible to these knockoffs, as they are drawn to the bright, colored bags that often feature popular cartoon characters. Because of the high dosage, children could become very sick, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

The CDC and Ompad recommended keeping any marijuana products away from children in childproof containers.

“I am not a person who thinks that cannabis should be illegal or that edibles should not be available,” Ompad said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF FOX 19

Examples of the knockoff THC products. These products have packaging that can mimic popular snacks, which can cause children to consume, despite the fact they are marketed toward adults.

“We just need to do a better job of keeping them away from children, (as well as) making it clear that they’re edibles

and what the adult dose is to get the effect that you want.”