

# Marijuana Commercialization and Impacts on Youth:

**Planning Commission  
City of Colorado  
Springs**

**August 28, 2024**



Henny Lasley  
Co-founder and Executive Director



We are an *ally*

We are a *resource*

We are *hand-raisers*

We are *advocates*

We are *solution-drivers*

We are *relentless*

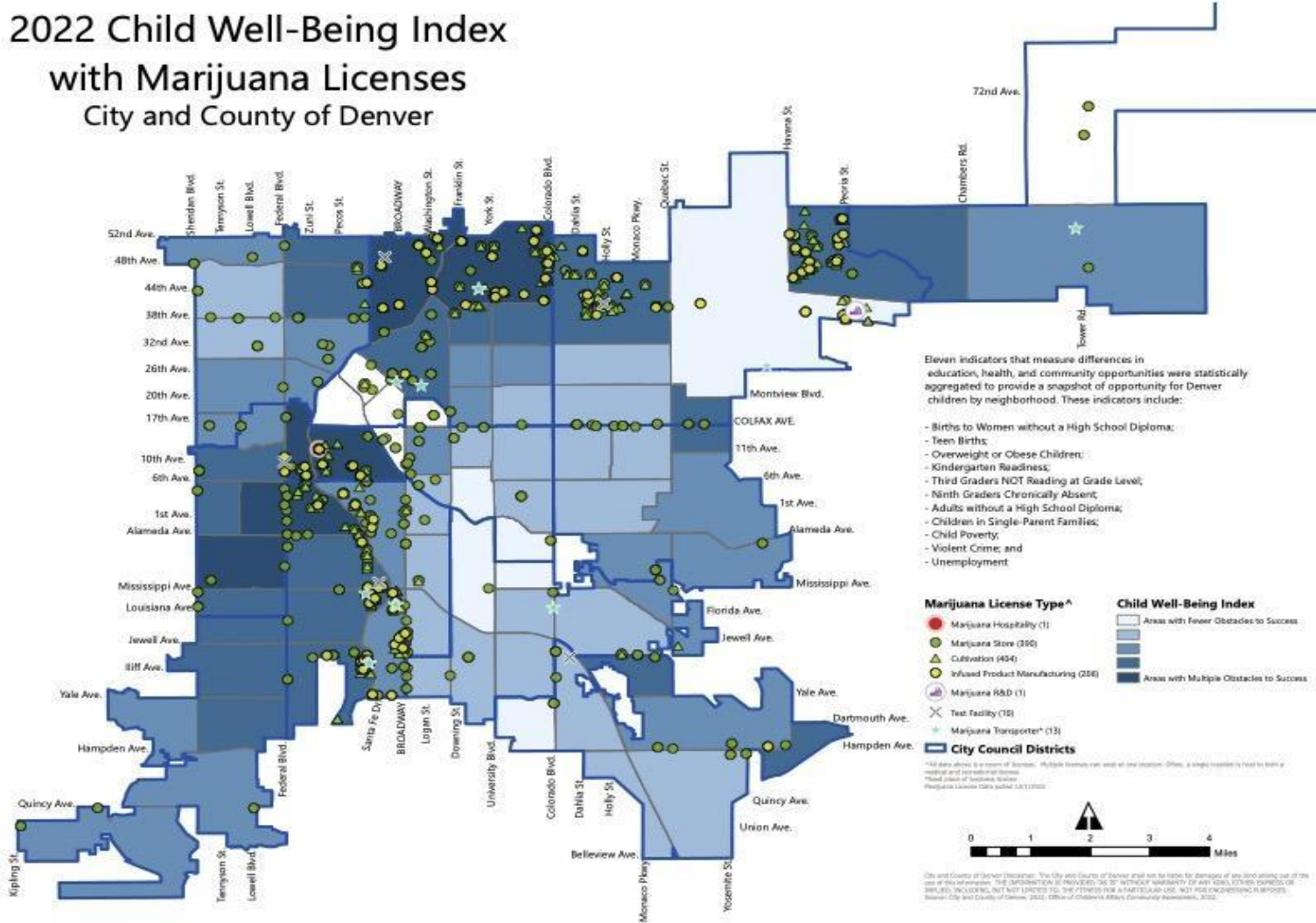
We are a *Voice*

**55% of  
new users  
are  
under age**



Source: 2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health

# 2022 Child Well-Being Index with Marijuana Licenses City and County of Denver



# KIDS COUNT IN COLORADO!

## Vulnerable Family & Child Health Comparison

### 2022 Births to Single Women

### 2022 Births to Women without a High School Diploma or GED

### 2022 Teen Births (rate per 1,000 female teens 15-19)

### 2022 Three Risk Factor Births

### 2023 Out-of-Home Placements (rate per 1,000)

### 2022 Teen (ages 15-19) Injury Deaths (rate per 100,000)

### 2022 Teen (ages 15-19) Deaths (rate per 100,000)

	<b>Denver</b>	<b>El Paso County</b>	<b>State of Colorado</b>
2022 Births to Single Women	26.7%	23.7%	23.4%
2022 Births to Women without a High School Diploma or GED	11.9%	7.0%	9.8%
2022 Teen Births (rate per 1,000 female teens 15-19)	15.6	13.8	10.7
2022 Three Risk Factor Births	2.9%	2.8%	2.7%
2023 Out-of-Home Placements (rate per 1,000)	7.0	5.9	5.4
2022 Teen (ages 15-19) Injury Deaths (rate per 100,000)	101.3	64	71.7
2022 Teen (ages 15-19) Deaths (rate per 100,000)	89.4	52.4	58.5

**A well-crafted cannabis legal framework preserves the authority of local jurisdictions to regulate business operations within their borders in keeping with community needs & values**

~Orenstein and Glantz

- **Cannabis availability**—how easy it to get—is a significant determinant of cannabis use and associated problems.
- Availability has many facets, including type, number, and **location outlets**; outlet retail practices, including days and hours of sale and use of security personnel; and accessibility to youth.
- Historically, alcohol and tobacco outlets have clustered in poor and minority communities, and indications are that cannabis outlets may be doing the same.
- Research has found **cannabis outlets to be associated with increased cannabis consumption and related harms, along with increases in crime, either in the immediate vicinity of the stores or in nearby or adjacent areas.**
- Cannabis policies regarding physical availability should build on the existing evidence regarding alcohol and tobacco availability, consumption, and harm.

# Proven track record of education campaigns driving strong policy



**2018**

**Colorado**

**Springs**

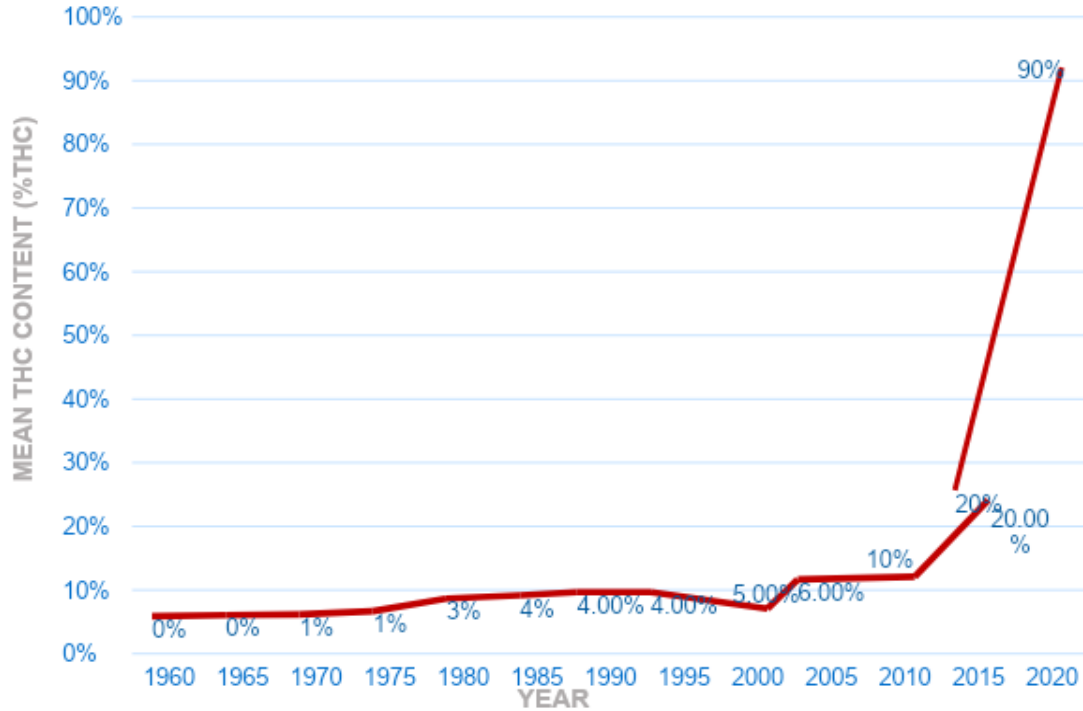
**Billboard**



# THC potency explosion- CO data

Commercialization has led to massive increases

THC Content in Colorado



Multiple studies show serious problems with high potency THC:

- sleep issues
- addiction
- depression
- anxiety
- psychosis
- suicide



# 5 grams of THC=5000 mg

FYI:

10mg=THC in edible serving  
10 servings in edible

100 servings in package

\$64.02= \$.05 per high



# What marketing audience?



zumiez

What are you looking for?

ORDER TRACKING



MEN WOMEN KIDS SHOES ACCESSORIES SKATE SNOW DEALS GIFT CARDS BRANDS SALE

Home > Accessories > Backpacks & Bags > Backpacks > Laptop Backpacks > Cookies Bungee Black Small Proof Backpack



## Cookies Bungee Black Small Proof Backpack

In stock SKU: 36282106670018

Size One Size

One Size

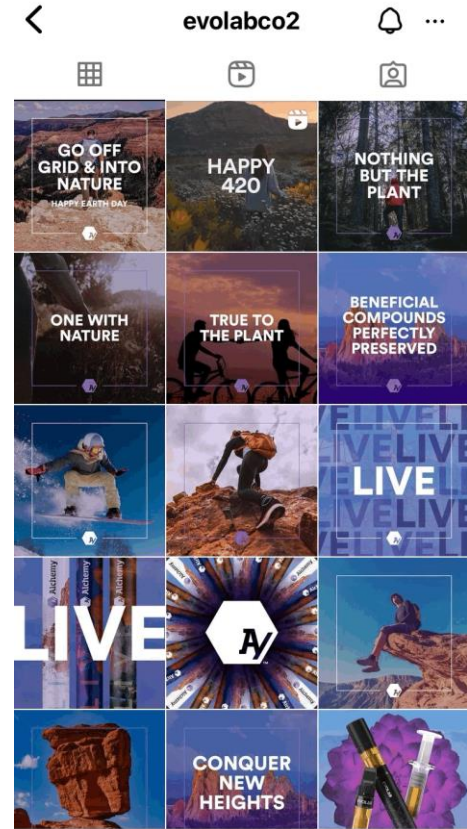
\$127.95

Stash Points: 12795

1

ADD TO MY BAG

Unfortunately, there are no stores nearby that offer pickup. You try a different location.

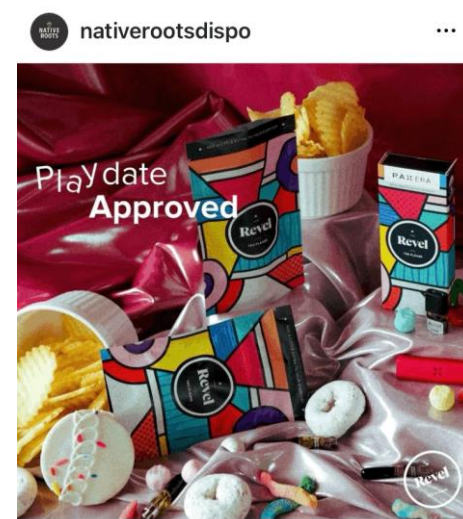


101 likes  
 iloveincredibles How 'bout them Buffs?  
 @cubuffsfootball @deionsanders



13 likes

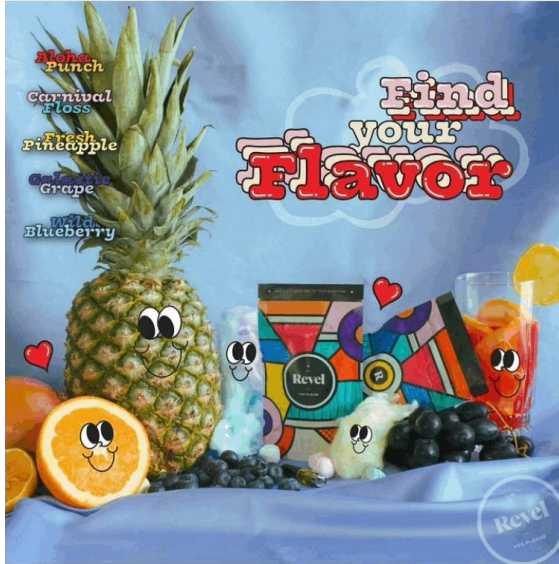
# Colorful and aspirational lifestyle promotions



25 likes  
 nativerootsdispo Tag some friends you'd invite to this sesh!  
 February 9

# Cartoons on social media

 nativerootsdispo



19 likes

nativerootsdispo Find your favorite flav and turn this Monday into a Funday with Revel! ❤️

 cookiessf  
Seasons Greetings



14,759 likes

cookiessf Happy Holidayze. 🍪🧑‍🎄👋

 iloveincredibles



91 likes

iloveincredibles Don't be scared, it's your favorite fruit (bat) trio flying in to microdose your Monday... more

DISPENSARY  
18+ MED  
21+ REC  
*Silver Stem*<sup>TM</sup>  
FINE CANNABIS

Continuum  
**WEST**



# Why this work Matters





# High-potency THC linked with a tripled risk for psychosis

**Definition = over 15% THC**

**HIGH-POTENCY THC** (15% THC or more) **3X** INCREASED RISK OF PSYCHOSIS

**DAILY USE** (15% THC or more) **5X** INCREASED RISK OF PSYCHOSIS

**NOTE: 93% of products in CO, WA & OR are over 15%=  
HIGH THC**

# Progression from first use to regular use

## Alcohol

- First use: 16.53 years
- Regular use: 19.19 years

A large red arrow pointing to the right, representing the time interval between first and regular use of alcohol.

**2.62 years**

## Cannabis

- First use: 16.31
- Regular use: 16.51

A smaller light blue arrow with a yellow outline pointing to the right, representing the time interval between first and regular use of cannabis.

**2.52 months**

# Public health statements regarding adolescent marijuana use

## Any marijuana use:

- future high-risk use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs
- developing suicidal thoughts or attempting suicide
- developing psychotic symptoms in adulthood

## Starting MJ use before 13:

- future marijuana addiction

## Weekly or more frequent use:

- failure to graduate from high school
- not attaining a college degree

## Daily or near-daily use:

- developing a psychotic disorder such as schizophrenia in adulthood

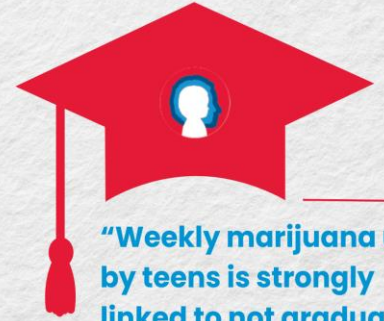
# Colorado Public Health Campaign Statements



**“Daily marijuana use among adolescents can lead to serious mental health issues like schizophrenia in adulthood”**



**“Frequent marijuana use in teens is linked to psychotic symptoms like hallucinations, paranoia, and delusions in adulthood”**



**“Weekly marijuana use by teens is strongly linked to not graduating high school.”**



**“Weekly or more frequent marijuana use by adolescents and young adults is associated with impaired learning, memory, math, and reading achievement”**



**“Weekly marijuana use by teens is linked to an increased risk of suicidal thoughts”**





**I WANT YOU  
FOR LIFE**

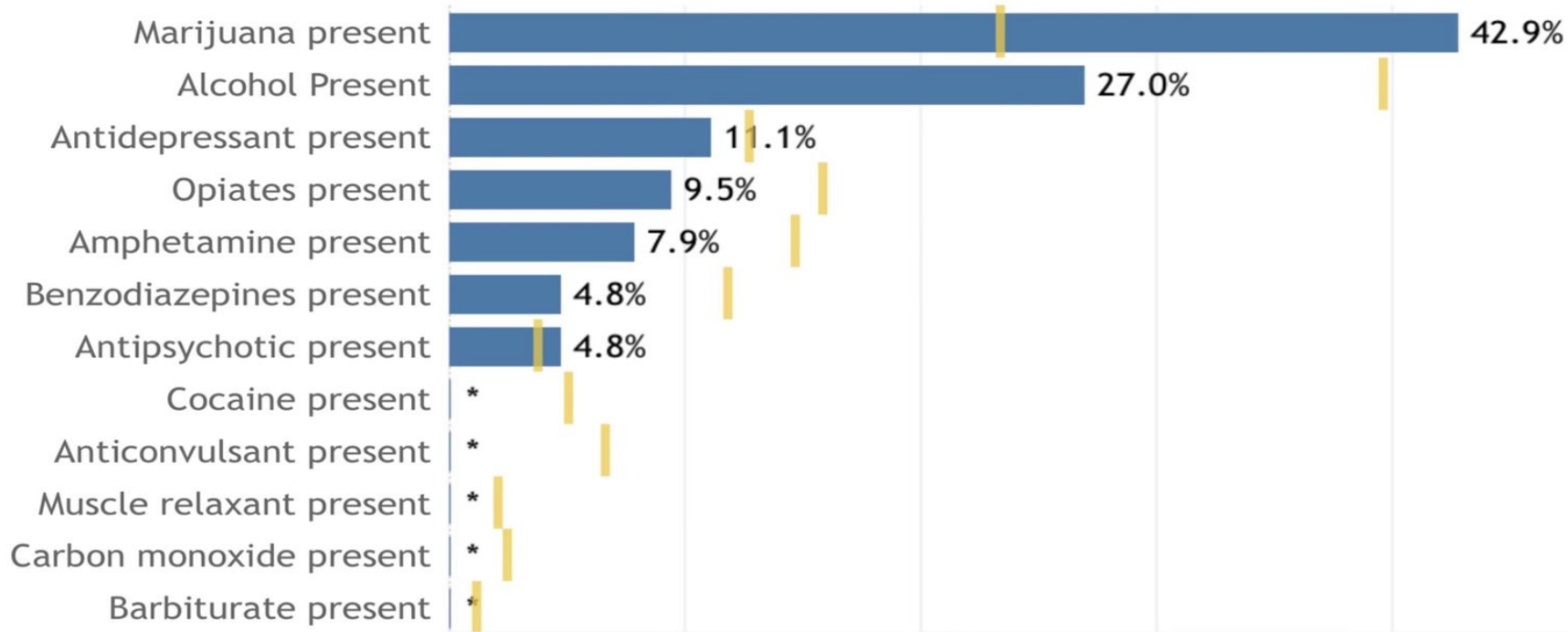
## The Marijuana Industry Profits from Addiction

75% of consumers are heavy users

- 47% use multiple times a day
- 17% use daily
- 10% use 5x or more per week

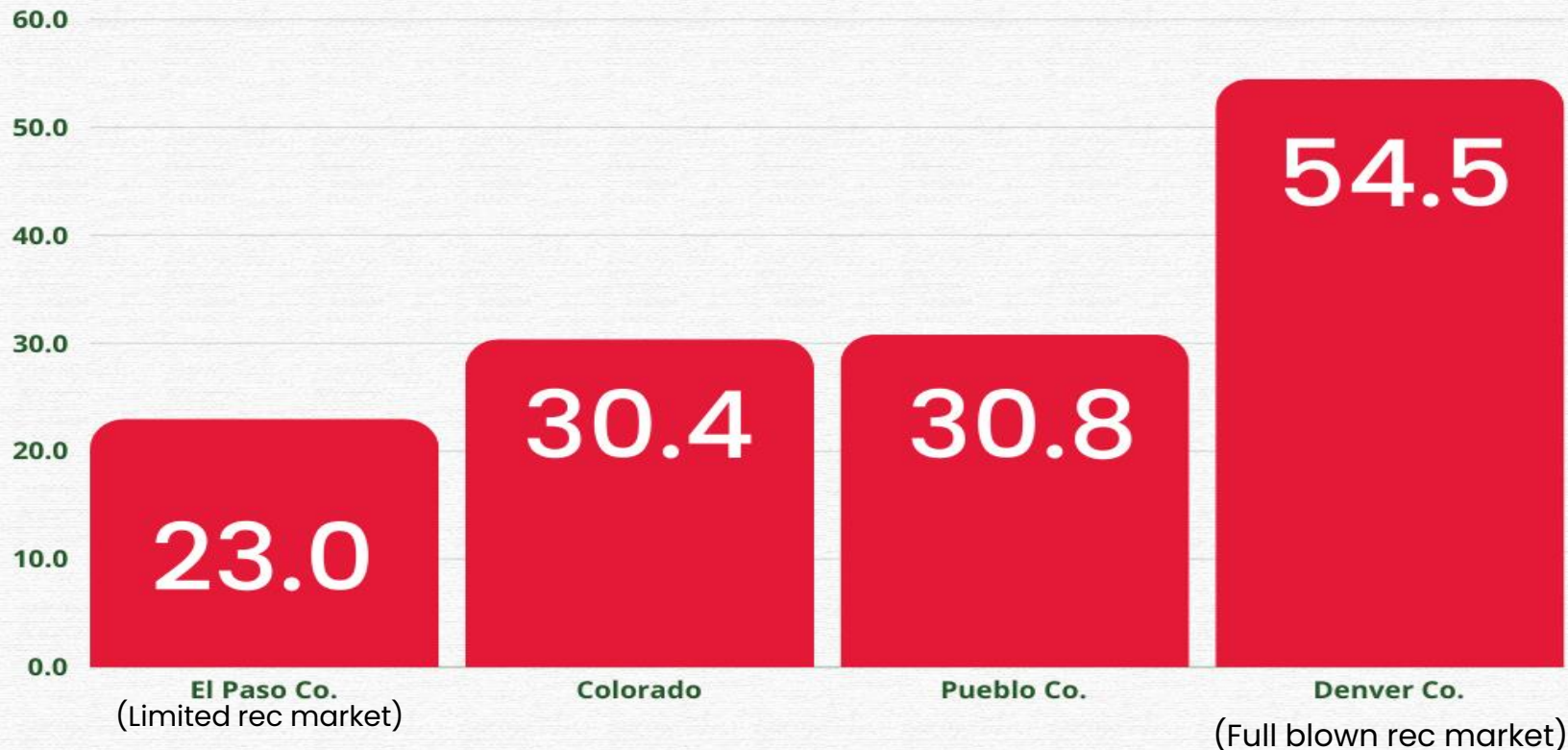
Source: MJ Biz Daily, 11/1/2022

# 2021 Teen Deaths By Suicide: Marijuana is #1 substance in toxicology results among 15-19 year olds



Source: Colorado Violent Death Reporting System Dashboard

## Suicides among 15-18 year olds, percentage with marijuana present in autopsy toxicology screen, 2014-2021



# WE HAVE A YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH & SUICIDE CRISIS IN CO

<b>Teen Suicide by Race</b>	<b>Percent Of Teens Who Have Marijuana In Their System At The Time Of Suicide</b>	<b>Percent Of 15-19 Year Olds Who Identify As MALE Who Die By Suicide With Marijuana In Their System</b>
<b>BLACK YOUTH 15-19 YR.</b>	<b>66.7%</b>	<b>62.5%</b>
<b>HISPANIC YOUTH 15-19 YR.</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>56.3%</b>
<b>WHITE NON- HISPANIC YOUTH 15-19 YR.</b>	<b>33.3%</b>	<b>41.7%</b>

Colorado Violent Death Reporting System



- Dr. Deepali Gershan, IL addiction psychiatrist “This isn’t the cannabis of 20, 30 years ago,” Up to 20% of my caseload is patients for whom I suspect cannabis use triggered a psychotic episode.
- Dr. Sharon Levy, Boston Children's Hospital: “This is a lot of my life, figuring out what to do with these kids.”
- Dr. Roneet Lev, San Diego ER physician: “This is attacking young brains.”
- Dr. Karen Randall, Pueblo, CO : “We’re just making this huge population of people who we can no longer fix.”

# Public and Policy Misperceptions Persist



**25% more  
dispensaries in  
El Paso County than  
Starbucks &  
McDonalds  
COMBINED**



[onechancetogrowup.org](http://onechancetogrowup.org)

[henny@onechancetogrowup.org](mailto:henny@onechancetogrowup.org)



**Protecting kids from the  
dangers of THC through  
transparency, education,  
empowerment  
and policy change**