

# Substance Abuse Trends **Alert!**

April 2019

## Adolescent Marijuana Use is Increasing in Florida

### Marijuana Use among Florida Youth is Greater than the National Rate

Based on data from the 2006-2017 [National Survey on Drug Use and Health](#), the reported marijuana use in the past 30 days among Florida adolescents (aged 12-17) increased from 6.8% in 2014-15 to 7.5% in 2016-17 while the national rate declined from 7.4% to 6.4% during the same time period. According to the [CDC](#), [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#), and the [American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry](#), marijuana use among adolescents can result in learning, emotional and health problems.

### Higher Rates of Marijuana Use among Florida Girls than Boys

Contrary to research studies, girls reported higher rates of past 30-day and lifetime marijuana use than boys in Florida. According to [2018 FYSAS](#) data (Figure 1), 21.0% of girls reported lifetime use and 11.0% reported using marijuana in the past 30 days compared to 19.4% and 10.7% for boys respectively. The gender difference in past 30-day marijuana use was also observed in five of seven Florida Managing Entity Regions, particularly for Southeast Florida Behavioral Network (14.3% for girls and 12.0% for boys).

### Synthetic Marijuana Use in Florida

As an abused substance, synthetic marijuana is more potent than marijuana. Although marijuana use appears to be increasing for Florida's youth, [2018 FYSAS data](#) indicate that synthetic marijuana use among Florida high school students has declined progressively since 2012. By 2018, only 3.5% of Florida high school students reported lifetime synthetic marijuana use and 1.1% reported use in the past 30 days.

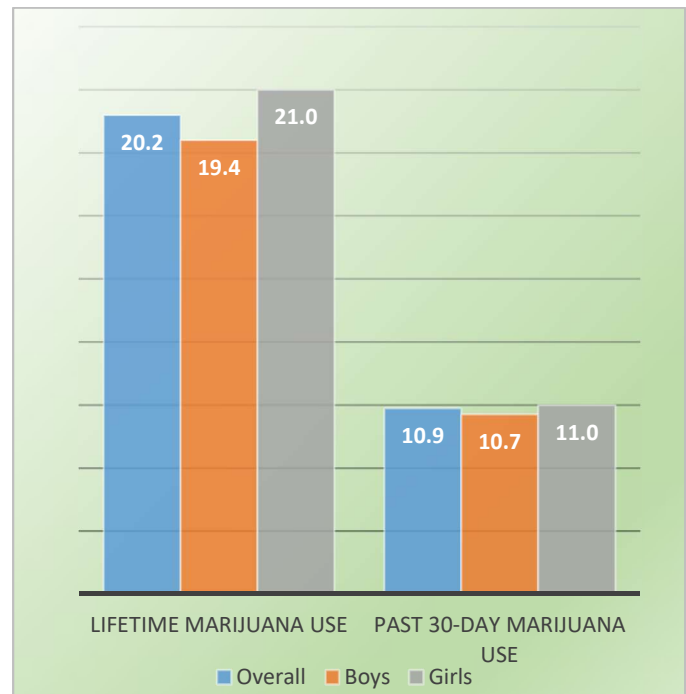


Figure 1. Gender differences in marijuana use

### Challenge to Prevent Adolescent Marijuana Use

To date, 33 states, including Florida, have legalized medical marijuana. Recent studies indicate reductions in perceived marijuana harm and increased marijuana use ([Chen & Yu, 2018](#)) associated with marijuana laws. Weekly updates from the [Florida Department of Health Office of Medical Marijuana Use](#) indicate an increase in the number of patients registered for marijuana and the amount of marijuana prescribed since activation of the Medical Marijuana Laws in December 2017. Like tobacco and alcohol, legalization and sale may increase marijuana availability at home for adolescents ([Hall & Weier, 2017](#)). For more information, please visit:



[NIH National Institute of Drug Abuse Marijuana Research and Resources](#)

[NIH National Institute of Drug Abuse 2018 Monitoring the Future Infographics](#)

[Office of National Drug Control Policy Substance Use Prevention: A Resource Guide for School Staff](#)

## References

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- 2) American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry. [Marijuana and Teens](#). 2018.
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- 5) Schepis, T.S, Desai, R.A., Cavallo, D.A., et al. (2011). Gender differences in adolescent marijuana use and associated psychosocial characteristics. [J Addict Med 5 \(1\): 65-73](#).
- 6) Chen, X. & Yu, B. (2018). Medical marijuana laws and marijuana use among U.S. adolescents: Evidence from Michigan Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Data. Journal of Drug Education (online, Oct 9, 2018), doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047237918803361>.
- 7) Hall, W., & Weier. (2017). Has marijuana legalization increased marijuana use among U.S. youth? [JAMA Pediatrics, 171\(2\): 116-118](#).



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