

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: National Institutes of Health Study Reports Marijuana Use at Historic High Among College-Aged Adults in 2020**

A recent research study supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) reports changing substance use trends among college students and college-aged adults. Marijuana use continued to rise among college students over the past five years and remained at historically high levels among same-aged peers who are not in college in 2020, according to survey results from the 2020 Monitoring the Future panel study. This represents the highest levels of marijuana use recorded since the 1980s. The survey also found that marijuana vaping and nicotine vaping leveled off in 2020 after [sharp increases reported](#) every year since 2017 for both college students and same-aged respondents who are not in college.

The [Monitoring the Future \(MTF\)](#) study has been annually tracking substance use among college students and noncollege adults ages 19-22 since 1980. Funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), part of the National Institutes of Health, the survey is conducted annually by scientists at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research, Ann Arbor. Results are based on data from college students one to four years beyond high school graduation who are enrolled full-time in a two- or four-year college in March of the given year, compared with same-age high school graduates not enrolled full-time in college. Data for the 2020 survey were collected online from 1,550 college-aged adults between March 20, 2020 through November 30, 2020.

Annual marijuana use has continued to increase over the past five years for college students, reaching the highest level in over three-and-a-half decades in 2020. Among college students, 44% reported using marijuana in the past year in 2020, compared to 38% in 2015, representing a significant increase. For young adults not in college, annual marijuana use in 2020 remained at 43% (the same historically high level as recorded in 2018 and 2019). In contrast, similar increases and record highs in marijuana use have not been observed among 12th graders in recent years, with 35% of high school seniors reporting using marijuana in the past year in 2020.

Daily or near daily use of marijuana has continued to rise among college students since 2015, with 8% of college students reporting using marijuana on a daily or near daily basis in 2020 compared to nearly 5%

in 2015. In comparison, 13% of same-age adults not in college reported using marijuana on a daily or near daily basis in 2020, consistent with recent years.

The 2020 MTF survey also recorded a halt in the dramatic increases in vaping marijuana and vaping nicotine among college-aged adults observed between 2017 and 2019. During this time, the percentage of college-aged adults who reported vaping marijuana in the past 30 days more than doubled, from 5% to 14% for college students, and 8% to 17% for noncollege respondents. In 2020, these increases leveled off, with 12% of college students and 14% of noncollege respondents reporting vaping marijuana in the past 30 days. Similarly, there was a nonsignificant change for vaping nicotine in 2020, with 19% of college students and 24% of noncollege respondents reporting vaping nicotine in the past 30 days compared to 22% and 18% in 2019, and 6% and 8% in 2017, respectively.

Historically, college students have reported the highest levels of binge drinking compared to same-aged youth who are not enrolled in college. This is the first year where binge drinking was similar between the two groups. While binge drinking has been gradually declining among college students for the past few decades, this is a new historic low, which may reflect effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of reduced time with college friends.

Among noncollege respondents, trends in alcohol use across all measures were stable over the past five years, with no drop in 2020. In 2020, 49% of noncollege respondents reported alcohol use in the past 30-days, 22% reported being drunk in the past 30 days, and 24% reported binge drinking.

The National Institutes of Health is the primary agency of the United States government responsible for biomedical and public health research. It was founded in the late 1880s and is now part of the United States Department of Health and Human Services. For more information please visit [www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov).

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition is concerned about the prevention of underage marijuana use and its negative consequences that can follow into adulthood. Please follow us on [www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition](https://www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition) or visit the Keeping Glen Cove SAFE: Underage Marijuana Use Awareness Campaign page on SAFE's website to learn more about Marijuana Use and the full results of the Monitoring The Future Survey at [www.safeglencove.org](http://www.safeglencove.org).