

Press Release

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: Marijuana Use Highest Ever in 2021

According to a recent report from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), marijuana use in the past year reported by young adults 19 to 30 years old increased significantly in 2021 compared to five and 10 years ago. These are the highest use reports in this age group since 1988 per Monitoring the Future (MTF) panel study.

Rates of past-month nicotine vaping, which have been gradually increasing in young adults for the past four years, also continued their general upward trend in 2021, despite leveling off in 2020. Past-month marijuana vaping, which had significantly decreased in 2020, rebounded to pre-pandemic levels in 2021. Rates of past-month nicotine vaping, which have been gradually increasing in young adults for the past four years, also continued their general upward trend in 2021, despite leveling off in 2020. Past-month marijuana vaping, which had significantly decreased in 2020, rebounded to pre-pandemic levels in 2021.

Data for the 2021 survey were collected online from April 2021 through October 2021. Key findings in the young adult group include:

Marijuana Use: Past-year, past-month, and daily marijuana use (use on 20 or more occasions in the past 30 days) reached the highest levels ever recorded since these trends were first monitored in 1988. The proportion of young adults who reported past-year marijuana use reached 43% in 2021, a significant increase from 34% five years ago (2016) and 29% 10 years ago (2011). Marijuana use in the past month was reported by 29% of young adults in 2021, compared to 21% in 2016 and 17% in 2011. Daily marijuana use also significantly increased during these time periods, reported by 11% of young adults in 2021, compared to 8% in 2016 and 6% in 2011.

As the drug landscape shifts over time, this data provides a window into the substances and patterns of use favored by young adults. We need to know more about how young adults are using drugs like marijuana and the health effects that result from consuming different potencies and forms of these substances. According to NIDA, young adults are in a critical life stage and honing their ability to make informed choices. Understanding how substance use can impact the formative choices in young adulthood is critical to help position the new generations for success.

One of the best ways we can learn more about drug use and its impact on people is to observe which drugs are appearing, in which populations, for how long, and under which contexts. MTF and similar large-scale surveys on a consistent sample population allow NIDA researchers to assess the effects of ‘natural experiments’ like the pandemic and examine how and why drugs are used in order to highlight critical areas to guide where the research should go next and to inform public health interventions.

Since 1975 the MTF study has annually surveyed substance use behaviors and attitudes among a nationally representative sample of teens. A longitudinal panel study component of MTF conducts follow-up surveys on a subset of these participants to track their drug use through adulthood. Participants self-report their drug use behaviors across three primary time periods – lifetime, past year (12 months), and past month (30 days). The MTF study is conducted by scientists at the University of Michigan’s Institute for Social Research, Ann Arbor, and is funded by NIDA, part of the National Institutes of Health.

Results from the related 2021 MTF study of substance use behaviors and related attitudes among teens in the United States was released in December 2021. The 2021 Monitoring the Future data tables highlighting the survey results are available online from the University of Michigan.

2022 results are upcoming in December 2022.

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA): NIDA is a component of the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIDA supports most of the world’s research on the health aspects of drug use and addiction. The Institute carries out a large variety of programs to inform policy, improve practice, and advance addiction science. For more information about NIDA and its programs, visit <https://www.nida.nih.gov/>.

SAFE is the only alcohol and substance use prevention agency in Glen Cove. Its Coalition is conducting an opioid prevention awareness campaign entitled. “Keeping Glen Cove SAFE,” in order to educate and update the community regarding opioid use and its consequences. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE’s website to learn more about the Opioid Epidemic at www.safeglencove.org.