



News Release

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Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission Releases Two New Studies in Preparation for Adult-Use Legalization

The Maryland Cannabis Use Baseline Study and the 2022 Maryland Medical Cannabis Patient Survey Reports released this week to inform public health and safety measures.

LINTHICUM, MD. (March 22, 2023) –The Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission (the “Commission”) announced at a public Commission meeting yesterday that it has completed and released two important studies to help prepare the state for adult-use cannabis sales, slated to begin on July 1st this year. The 2022 Maryland Medical Cannabis Patient Survey (MMCPS-22) and Maryland Cannabis Use Baseline Study reports provide critical data and insights on patterns of use and perceptions about cannabis prior to a legalized adult-use market in Maryland. “These studies are the result of collaborative efforts of many state agencies, organizations, and Maryland residents”, said Dawn Berkowitz, the Commission’s deputy executive director. “The rich information provided allows the State to plan data-driven initiatives to guide health, safety, and regulatory efforts.”

The MMCPS-22 was conducted in September 2022, shortly before the November 8th ballot referendum where Marylanders approved legal use of cannabis by adults at least 21 years of age. This represented not only the first survey of medical cannabis patients in the State, but also one of the largest single recruitments of individuals who consume cannabis to date. Complete survey responses were anonymously collected from more than 13,000 patients from all 24 Maryland jurisdictions, providing valuable insight into patterns of cannabis use and dosing, perceived efficacy and health outcomes, access and barriers to medical cannabis, and health and safety measures related to cannabis use and storage.

Survey results found current medical cannabis patients largely plan to remain in the medical cannabis program, even with an expanded legal adult-use market in the State. Most patients also perceive cannabis to be effective for their qualifying condition, use cannabis on a regular basis, and report using more than one consumption method

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(e.g., flower, edible, vape, etc.). Those patients who have children in the home are more likely to securely store or lock-up their cannabis, however many also reported smoking or vaping cannabis inside their home. To build on initial findings and compare patient behaviors prior to and following the ballot referendum, a second Maryland Medical Cannabis Patient Survey (MMCPS-23) will be implemented this fall. “The Commission would like to thank all the patients who participated in the first survey cycle”, said Berkowitz. “The information provided is invaluable to the State in planning for a continued medical program, as well as expanded use of cannabis to adults 21+. We encourage continued patient engagement with the MMCPS-23, as well as with other future research opportunities.”

The second report, the Maryland Cannabis Use Baseline Study, utilizes not only dosage and other data from the patient survey, but provides a detailed overview of cannabis use from numerous State and national surveys and programs to provide a “first look” at cannabis use in Maryland prior to legal adult-use sales. Statutorily required by legislation passed in 2022, key findings include that one in four Maryland high school students have tried cannabis at least once and nearly one in ten Maryland adults currently use cannabis. Additionally, while few individuals overall are hospitalized each year due to cannabis use, hospitalizations as well as calls to the Maryland Poison Center due to accidental cannabis exposures among children are on the rise. The study also showed an association between self-reported “poor” mental health and increased cannabis consumption that warrants further examination. The Commission submitted the baseline report to the Maryland General Assembly and Governor Moore on March 1, 2023 and is required to conduct future biannual cannabis use reports. The baseline report will also be made available to the new Cannabis Public Health Advisory Council, which is tasked with making recommendations regarding initiatives to prevent cannabis use by individuals under the age of 21 years, educational programs for schools, public health campaigns, and other related efforts.

The [2022 Maryland Medical Cannabis Patient Survey](#) and [Maryland Cannabis Use Baseline Study](#) reports can be accessed at mmcc.maryland.gov.

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