

Marijuana

The facts on HARM in San Diego County

San Diego County created **Health Advocates Rejecting Marijuana (HARM)** because local pro-marijuana influences, including media messages and business practices, are overwhelming well-documented scientific evidence of harm. HARM's Mission: Reduce the problems associated with the use of marijuana, especially by youth, by changing community norms and perception of its harm.

- Marijuana is the most widely used illicit drug among youth in San Diego County and nationally. 19 per cent of San Diego County 11th graders surveyed used marijuana in the past 30 days.¹ Two-thirds of new marijuana users each year are between the ages of 12 and 17, while the number of eighth graders trying marijuana has doubled in 10 years.²
- 49 % of juvenile arrestees in San Diego County in a SANDAG study tested positive for marijuana. 82 per cent had tried marijuana.³
- 93 percent of San Diego Juvenile Arrestee Monitoring (JAM) participants self-reported marijuana as their primary drug of choice. 89 percent tested positive on admission. 100 percent of other drug users also tested positive for marijuana.⁴
- San Diego County adolescent treatment providers say marijuana is the drug of choice for teens entering treatment.
- Youth think marijuana is less harmful than tobacco. More youth smoke marijuana than tobacco cigarettes in San Diego. Only 32 % of youth surveyed in the SANDAG study thought marijuana was "extremely bad or very bad" for them. 75% thought tobacco was "extremely bad or very bad."⁵
- 41 per cent of 11th graders report it's "very easy" to get marijuana.⁶ It's as easy to get marijuana as it is cigarettes. 75 % reported it's easy or very easy to obtain either substance.⁷
- 77 per cent of marijuana users in the U.S. also smoke tobacco.⁸
- The rate of marijuana-related Emergency Department visits in San Diego has doubled from 1995 to 2002 to 1,174 mentions in 2002.⁹
- Driving while high is an emerging threat. Driving after marijuana use is more prevalent (68 percent) than driving after alcohol use (48 percent of those who drink "regularly"). More than half the teens who reported illegal drug use also reported that they were not concerned about riding in a car with a driver who is using illegal drugs (57 percent).¹⁰

References:

- 1 *California Healthy Kids Survey 2000*
- 2 *National Survey of Drug Use and Health 2003*
- 3 *San Diego Association of Governments Substance Abuse Monitoring (SAM) project 2003*
- 4 *Juvenile Arrestee Monitoring study*
- 5 *California Healthy Kids Survey, San Diego County 2003*
- 6 *San Diego Association of Governments Substance Abuse Monitoring (SAM) project 2003*
- 7 *California Student Survey, Office of the Attorney General*
- 8 *San Diego Association of Governments Substance Abuse Monitoring (SAM) project 2003*
- 9 *Moore/Moser Yale School of Medicine Study Journal of General Internal Medicine, January 2005*
- 10 *DAWN – Drug Abuse Warning Network 1985-2002 San Diego*
- 11 *2002 survey among teen drivers conducted by SADD, Inc.—Students Against Destructive Decisions/Students Against Driving Drunk—and Liberty Mutual Group*

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