



Working to Reform Marijuana Laws

Societal Impacts of Cannabis Dispensaries/ Retailers

Retail cannabis facilities are not positively associated with increased criminality

"The objective of this study is to investigate whether a particular element of MMLs, namely allowance for dispensaries, affects local crime and other indicators of marijuana misuse. We find no evidence that ordinances allowing for marijuana dispensaries lead to an increase in crime. In fact, we see some evidence of a reduction in property crime. ... Our study appears to reinforce the conclusions from other studies that fail to find an increase in the type of crime predicted by law enforcement. We find no effects on burglary, robberies, or assaults, which are the types of crimes one would expect if dispensaries were prime targets as a result of their holding large amounts of cash. ... Our findings indicate that policymakers should be careful in how they regulate the presence of dispensaries, while not jumping to the conclusion that dispensaries are clearly crime generating hot-spots. ... Our findings suggest that it is possible to regulate these markets and find a common ground between safety and access to medical marijuana."

High on Crime? Exploring the Effects of Marijuana Dispensary Laws on Crime in California Counties, IZA Institute of Labor Economics Discussion Paper Series, May 2018

By contrast, dispensary closures are associated with increases in crime

"The results presented above show that temporary dispensary closures increase crime in the short-run. ... Analyzing medical marijuana dispensary closures in the City of Los Angeles, we find no support for the idea that closing dispensaries reduces crime. Rather, temporary closures deter some types of Part I crime. ... Our findings have direct policy implications for regulating marijuana sales in the U.S. They imply that dispensary closures, and potentially the closure of other types of retail establishments, exert a significant negative externality in terms of neighborhood criminality. A quick back of the envelope cost calculation using the change in larceny theft at 1/3 of a mile and crime costs ... suggests that an open dispensary provides over \$30,000 per year in social benefit in terms of larcenies prevented."

Going to pot: The impact of dispensary closures on crime. Journal of Urban Economics, 2017

Retail cannabis facilities are associated with rising housing values

"In this paper we contribute to the debate on the impacts of recreational marijuana legalization on local communities by examining the effects of retail marijuana stores on nearby house prices in Denver, Colorado. ... Using a difference-in-differences model, we compare houses that are in close proximity to a retail conversion to those that are slightly farther away from a retail conversion before and after the legalization of recreational sales. We find that after the law went into effect at the end of 2013, single family residences close to a retail conversion (within 0.1 miles) increased in value by approximately 8.4% relative to houses that are located slightly farther from a conversion (between 0.1 miles and 0.25 miles) in 2014 compared to the previous year."

Contact high: The external effects of retail marijuana establishments on house prices, Real Estate Economics, 2017

"Does legalizing retail marijuana generate more benefits than costs? This paper addresses this question by measuring the benefits and costs that are capitalized into housing values. We exploit the time-series and cross-sectional variations in the adoption of Colorado's municipality retail marijuana laws (RMLs) and examine the effect on housing values with a difference-in-differences strategy. Our

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estimates show that the legalization leads to an average 6 percent increase in housing values, indicating that the capitalized benefits outweigh the costs. ... In conclusion, this paper provides convincing causal evidence that legalizing retail marijuana generates net benefits, as measured through the housing market."

The effect of legalizing retail marijuana on housing values: Evidence from Colorado, University of Mississippi working paper series, 2016

Dispensary clients tend to be older, value access to specific strains of cannabis, and tend to require greater quantities of cannabis to treat their therapeutic condition

"Regarding age, respondents who used dispensaries were older than those not using dispensaries, perhaps reflecting that services that these dispensaries provide, such as storefront access and personalized service, may be particularly appealing to older adults. ... A larger proportion of dispensary clients considered access to their preferred strain to be important than those not using dispensaries. ... With regard to cannabis use, dispensary users were more likely to use larger amounts of cannabis. ... [D]ispensaries were widely used and well rated by respondents. Given this high level of endorsement by patients, future regulations should consider including storefront dispensaries as an authorized source of cannabis for therapeutic purposes."

Are dispensaries indispensable? Patient experiences and access to cannabis from medical cannabis dispensaries in Canada. International Journal on Drug Policy, 2017

The prevalence of cannabis dispensaries is not positively associated with increased teen use

"The distance from school to the nearest medical marijuana dispensary was not associated with adolescents' use of marijuana in the past month or susceptibility to use marijuana in the future, nor was the weighted count of medical marijuana dispensaries within the 3-mile band of school. Neither the product price nor the product variety in the dispensary nearest to school was associated with marijuana use or susceptibility to use. The results were robust to different specifications of medical marijuana measures."

Medical marijuana availability, price, and product variety and adolescent's marijuana use, Journal of Adolescent Health, 2018

"We aimed to examine the availability of medical marijuana dispensaries, price of medical marijuana products, and variety of medical marijuana products in school neighborhoods and their associations with adolescents' use of marijuana and susceptibility to use marijuana in the future. ... The distance from school to the nearest medical marijuana dispensary was not associated with adolescents' use of marijuana in the past month or susceptibility to use marijuana in the future, nor was the weighted count of medical marijuana dispensaries within the 3-mi band of school. Neither the product price nor the product variety in the dispensary nearest to school was associated with marijuana use or susceptibility to use. The results were robust to different specifications of medical marijuana measures. ... There was no evidence supporting the associations of medical marijuana availability, price, or product variety around school with adolescents' marijuana use and susceptibility to use."

Medical marijuana availability, price, and product variety, and adolescent's marijuana use, Journal of Adolescent Health, 2018

Cannabis retailers are not selling to minors and their products are not being diverted to the underage market

"On December 19, 2017 OLCC [the Oregon Liquor Control Commission] marijuana inspectors visited 20 marijuana retailers in central Oregon, and all of the 20 businesses visited in Bend and La

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Pine passed a check for prohibiting sales to a minor volunteer. 'That our licensed retailers in central Oregon scored 100 percent on refusal to sell marijuana to a minor is a sign that this segment of our regulated industry understands the importance of compliance,' said Steve Marks, Executive Director of the OLCC."

"OLCC Launches Marijuana Retailer Minor Decoy Checks," Oregon Liquor and Control Board press release, December 20, 2017

Retail cannabis access is associated with reduced opioid consumption by the general public

"[S]tates providing legal access to marijuana through dispensaries reduce deaths due to opioid overdoses. ... We provide complementary evidence that dispensary provisions lower treatment admissions for addiction to pain medications. ... In short, our findings that legally protected and operating medical marijuana dispensaries reduce opioid-related harms suggests that some individuals may be substituting towards marijuana, reducing the quantity of opioids they consume or forgoing initiation of opiates altogether. ... At a minimum, however, our results suggest a potential overlooked positive effect of medical marijuana laws that support meaningful retail sales."

Do medical marijuana laws reduce addictions and deaths related to pain killers? Journal of Health Economics, 2018

"This paper uses a unique marijuana dispensary dataset to exploit within- and across-state variation in dispensary openings to estimate the effect increased access to marijuana has on narcotic-related admissions to treatment facilities and drug-induced mortalities. [It] finds that core-based statistical areas (CBSAs) with dispensary openings experience a 20 percentage point relative decrease in painkiller treatment admissions over the first two years of dispensary operations ... [and] provides suggestive evidence that dispensary operations negatively affect drug-induced mortality rates."

The effects of marijuana dispensaries on adverse opioid outcomes. SSRN Working Paper, 2017

The prevalence of cannabis dispensaries is inversely associated with traffic fatalities

"Both MMLs (medical marijuana laws) and dispensaries were associated with reductions in traffic fatalities, especially among those aged 25 to 44 years. ... On average, MML states had lower traffic fatality rates than non-MML states. Medical marijuana laws were associated with immediate reductions in traffic fatalities in those aged 15 to 24 and 25 to 44 years, and with additional yearly gradual reductions in those aged 25 to 44 years."

US Traffic Fatalities, 1985-2014, and Their Relationship to Medical Marijuana Laws, American Journal of Public Health, 2017