



Societal Impacts of Cannabis Dispensaries/Retailers

Retail cannabis facilities are not positively associated with increased criminality

"Many North American jurisdictions have legalized the operation of recreational marijuana dispensaries. A common concern is that dispensaries may contribute to local crime. ... The random assignment of recreational marijuana retail licenses in Washington State provides a unique opportunity to identify the causal effect of dispensary openings on local crime. ... Combining lottery data with detailed geocoded crime data, we estimate that the presence of a dispensary has no significant impact on local crime in the average neighborhood."

[The impact of recreational marijuana dispensaries on crime: evidence from a lottery experiment, *The Annals of Regional Science*, 2023](#)

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

"[We] assessed various factors that cause real estate prices to fluctuate in Colorado, Michigan, and Oregon — states where cannabis is legal and available from storefront merchants, with enough time in-market to identify the pre and post impacts of recreational cannabis dispensaries on home prices. We examined the annual increase (or decrease) in median home prices in zip codes with a dispensary, compared to median home price changes in the surrounding Zip codes, and then aggregated findings across cities in multiple states to uncover the trends. ... The result: On average, if a dispensary opens in your area, you're likely to see an additional \$4,400 increase in your property value each year."

[Retail Marijuana Dispensaries Could Drive Higher Home Values, *Tomo*, 2024](#)

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

"This is the first study to simultaneously examine the density of both MCDs [medical cannabis dispensaries] and RCRs [recreational cannabis retailers] around young adults' homes and associations with future intentions to use cannabis, including the co-use of cannabis with tobacco/nicotine. Our results suggest that young adults who lived in an area with a greater density of any type of outlet were not significantly more likely to report stronger intentions to use cannabis, e-cigarettes, or cannabis mixed with tobacco/nicotine in the future."

[Adolescent cannabis use among youth in zip codes with medical dispensaries, *Cannabis*, 2023](#)



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

"This study addresses this need by conducting point-of-sale audits examining regulatory compliance (e.g., age verification, signage), advertising/promotional strategies, products, and pricing among 150 randomly-selected cannabis retailers in 5 US cities (30/city: Denver, Colorado; Seattle, Washington; Portland, Oregon; Las Vegas, Nevada; Los Angeles, California) in Summer 2022. ... Age verification rates were high (>90%) ... Mystery shoppers were required to show ID immediately upon entry at 89.9% of retailers; 2.9% asked later."

[Cannabis retailer marketing strategies and regulatory compliance: A surveillance study of retailers in five US cities, *Addictive Behaviors*, 2023](#)

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

"A state representative sample was used to test associations between local access to cannabis retailers and Oregon adults' cannabis and alcohol use outcomes, as well as differential associations by age group. ... Odds of heavy alcohol use were lower with greater cannabis retail access, primarily among 21-24 and 65+ year olds. ... Frequent or high-volume alcohol use causes myriad acute and lifelong health risks to drinkers and those around them. Therefore, a relative reduction in older and young adults' high-risk drinking may be a net positive effect of shifting cannabis policies."

[Oregon adults' cannabis and alcohol use associations with local cannabis retail access, 2014-2022, *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 2025](#)

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

"County cannabis retail store density in Washington was associated with reduced accidental poisoning and opioid mortality while suicide and motor vehicle accident mortality rates did not appear to change. ... While these findings should be interpreted in the context of the broader literature on cannabis legalization, they are consistent with the possibility that increased access to legal cannabis reduced poisoning mortality in the first seven years of recreational stores operating in the state of Washington."

[Cannabis retail store density and county-level mortality from injury in the state of Washington from 2009-2020, *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, 2025](#)

Retail medical cannabis access is associated with improved mental health among older adults

"We use granular geographic data to estimate medical cannabis dispensary availability's effects on self-reported mental health in New York state from 2011 through 2021. ... We find that medical cannabis availability reduced past-month self-reported poor mental health days by nearly 15%—3.77 percentage points—among adults 65 and above. Our findings also rule out that medical cannabis availability had negative effects on having past-month poor mental health days for the adult population overall. These results suggest medical cannabis, where it is geographically available, has positive mental health impacts for older populations."

[Medical cannabis dispensary availability improved self-reported mental health among older adults in New York, *Economic Letters*, 2026](#)