Societal Impacts of Cannabis Dispensaries/Retailers

Retail cannabis facilities are not positively associated with increased criminality

"This study executes both synthetic and canonical difference-in-differences analyses, comparing census tracts with a recreational dispensary to control census tracts with no dispensary. Findings revealed consistent decreases in total Part 1 crime and total property crime. … State-mandated security measures may have been a factor that contributed to our results."
Marijuana dispensaries and neighborhood crime: Evidence from a statewide natural experiment in Ohio, *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 2026

"This study tested whether police-reported crime levels changed in the Canadian cities of Toronto and Ottawa after the first group of licensed stores opened in April 2019. The data included incidents of one type of personal crime and four types of property crime from January 2018 until February 2020, i.e., the last 15 months before stores began operating and the first 11 months afterward. … Overall, the study found no significant associations between crime levels and legal cannabis store openings in these cities."
Crime levels near federally legal cannabis stores in two Canadian cities, *The International Journal of Drug Policy*, 2026

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 stats 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

"In this large, multi-province study of Canadian secondary school students, spatial accessibility to cannabis retailers was not consistently associated with adolescent cannabis use following legalization. … These findings are consistent with a growing body of literature suggesting that increased retail availability of legal cannabis does not translate directly into higher rates of youth use. … A likely explanation [for this null effect] is that adolescents remain largely excluded from legal cannabis retail markets due to age restrictions, which may reduce the relevance of physical proximity to retail outlets for this age group."
Cannabis retail accessibility and adolescent use across a maturing market: Evidence from Canada, *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 2026

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