

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

"We evaluate the effect of medical and recreational dispensary openings on housing prices in Denver, Colorado. Using an event study approach, we find that the introduction of a new dispensary within a half-mile radius of a new home increases home prices by approximately 7.7 percent on average. The effect diminishes for homes further from new dispensaries but is consistent over time. Our results provide important and timely empirical evidence on the socioeconomic impacts of marijuana legalization."

[The effect of marijuana dispensary openings on housing prices, Contemporary Economic Policy, 2018](#)

Dispensary clientele 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

"This study sought to answer the question 'does permitting recreational cannabis dispensaries in a community effect high school students' cannabis use, their perceptions of the accessibility of cannabis, and their perceptions of the harmfulness and wrongfulness of using cannabis?' A cross-sectional survey of high school students was administered in 2013, before recreational cannabis dispensaries were permitted, and the survey was administered in 2015. ... The 2013 and 2015 data on student cannabis use and perceptions toward cannabis was analyzed to compare high school student use and perceptions in communities in southcentral Colorado that had permitted recreational cannabis dispensaries with high school students in those communities that had not permitted dispensaries. ... Based on the 2013 and 2015 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey data, permitting recreational cannabis dispensaries in a community does not appear to change student cannabis use or perceptions towards cannabis."

[High school student cannabis use and perceptions towards cannabis in southern Colorado — Comparing communities that permit recreational dispensaries and communities that do not, Journal of Cannabis Research, 2019](#)

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 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

"In this research, we have examined the effect of MML laws and the presence of active legal dispensaries on CDC age-adjusted opioid overdose death rates over the years 1999-2015. Our results suggest that states with active legal dispensaries see a drop in opioid death rates over time. ... Overall, this research provides evidence that states with MMLs may see a decline in opioid overdose death rates if they enact legal dispensaries."

[Medical marijuana laws and their effect on opioid-related mortality, Economics Bulletin, 2019](#)