



My name is Judson Bemis I am Co-chair of Smart Approaches to Marijuana Minnesota, I am also the founder of an online drug and alcohol intervention program for teens and their families (of which 90% of the families contact us because their teen is using cannabis) and I am a person in long term recovery from a cannabis use disorder. So, I feel I have a fairly unique position to address the issues related to commercialization of cannabis. There are three things I would like to say in my testimony.

First, please follow the science. There are now 20,000 peer reviewed articles on the effects of cannabis use. What makes this confusing is that the term Marijuana covers both CBD and cannabis. And while you will undoubtedly hear that “marijuana” has anecdotally helped many people's health conditions, I would like to remind you that the FDA has only approved a few medical uses for marijuana (Epidiolex a CBD based application for early childhood epilepsy and Marinol - synthetic THC - for nausea). Much of the testimony you will hear maybe related to CBD not cannabis. Making Minnesota’s current medical cannabis program more affordable would go a long way to solving many of these people’s problems but that does not necessarily mean we have to legalize cannabis.

Second, there is considerable concern over what is impairment, not just in the workplace but also on the road. A report once estimated that at any one time there could be as many as 15 million drivers driving high. Research has shown that driving on cannabis drivers have the following problems:

- Car following -not maintaining proper distance
- Speed – too slow/maintaining proper speed
- Delayed braking

And if alcohol is added

- Poor road tracking
- Divided attention
- Response time to emergencies/hazardsⁱ

Since cannabis use is associated with cognitive deficits, motivation problems, and perceptual distortions yet there is no roadside test for impairment. How can this be safe for Minnesotans?

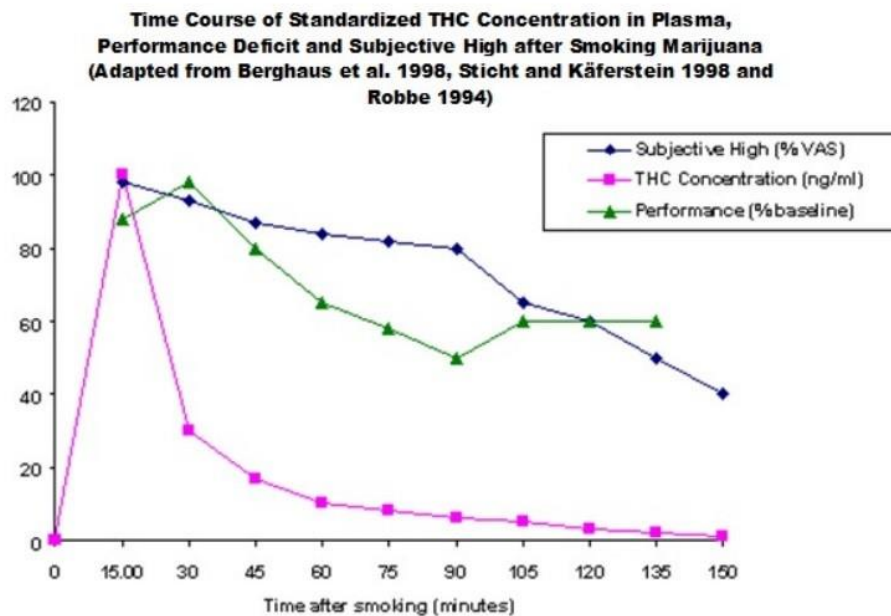
There is very good data behind Colorado’s measurement of marijuana traffic fatalities.

- Since recreational marijuana was legalized in 2013, traffic deaths where drivers tested positive for marijuana increased 138% while all Colorado traffic deaths increased 29%.
- Since recreational marijuana was legalized, traffic deaths involving drivers who tested positive for marijuana more than doubled from 55 in 2013 to 131 people killed in 2020.

- Since recreational marijuana was legalized, the percentage of all Colorado traffic deaths involving drivers who tested positive for marijuana increased from 11% in 2013 to 20% in 2020.ⁱⁱ

Third, while it is true that THC may leave the blood stream in 45 – 60 minutes the attached graph shows that impairment lasts several hours – and this is from a study done in 1998 with much lower potency cannabis.

Figure 4



Cannabis is not a benign substance. The astronomical increase in potency has changed the equation and there are lessons to be learned from other states. We urge you to slow down, look at the science, see what has happened in other states, before rushing into legalizing an addictive substance that will negatively affect the safety of the citizen of Minnesota.

ⁱ Bondallaz et al. 2016 Sewell, Polling & Soluoglu, 2009

ⁱⁱ THE LEGALIZATION OF MARIJUANA IN COLORADO: THE IMPACT, Volume 8 September 2021 Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area