

Achievements and Impact of the Cannabis Research Center 2023-2025

BACKGROUND

The University of Minnesota School of Public Health Cannabis Research Center (CRC) was launched in 2023, shortly after Minnesota legalized non-medical use of cannabis for individuals age 21 and older. The purpose of the CRC is to conduct research on the health implications of cannabis and be a trusted source of information to guide policy and practice related to cannabis use. The following summary details achievements and impact of the CRC from its inception in October 2023 to January 2025.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 15 | 6 | 41 | 34 | 350 | 15 |
| research projects | state and local collaborations | presentations and panels | media mentions | engaged followers | months of operation |

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Built infrastructure for the Cannabis Research Center that includes an outstanding team led by Traci Toomey, PhD
- Established collaborations with local and state agencies including:
 - Office of Cannabis Management (OCM)
 - Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)
 - Local Public Health Association (LPHA) and local public health agencies across MN
 - Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)
 - Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS)
 - University of Minnesota Extension
- Conducted or funded foundational and Minnesota-centered cannabis research projects. Early research includes but is not limited to assessing:
 - The likelihood of underage youth being able to buy hemp THC products
 - Potential risks and benefits of cannabis use
 - The prevalence of use of different cannabis products among teens and other age groups
- Built a state and national presence for the Cannabis Research Center by:
 - Establishing a social media presence and following to engage Minnesotans
 - Writing and disseminating seven research briefs
 - Presenting (40+) at meetings, conferences, panels and community events

CANNABIS RESEARCH

CRC research is already making a difference in Minnesota and beyond by generating new knowledge to inform cannabis-related policy, assessing and responding to the needs of local and state organizations, and engaging residents to solve community problems.

TWO EXAMPLES OF CRC RESEARCH:

Cannabis in Minnesota Schools

The CRC conducted a statewide survey of Minnesota school support staff to identify their needs related to cannabis legalization. Among support staff working in Minnesota schools who completed our survey (n=296):

- Most (68%) reported dealing with student cannabis use in the last year.
- About one half (51%) reported they dealt with students experiencing health problems related to cannabis in the last year. Increased anxiety after using cannabis was the most common cannabis-related health problems among students that staff reported.
- **Very few (8%) reported knowing about the forthcoming legal requirements for schools to provide cannabis education.**

2024 State Fair Survey

The CRC conducted a survey of adult attendees at the Minnesota State Fair regarding cannabis use and attitudes. Among adult attendees who completed a survey in 2024, 53% reported using cannabis in the past year; of these:

- 88% used edibles
- 64% drank beverages
- 54% smoked flower (i.e., bud, leaf) and
- 52% smoked or vaped something other than flower

A similar survey was conducted at the Fair in 2023 and one is planned for 2025, enabling us to examine trends over time as the Minnesota cannabis legalization landscape changes.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CRC RESEARCH PROJECTS, VISIT: [Z.UMN.EDU/CANNABISRESEARCHCENTER](https://z.umn.edu/CannabisResearchCenter)

TRANSLATING RESEARCH INTO ACTION AND FUTURE WORK

The CRC is anchored by a commitment to the health, safety and wellbeing of all Minnesotans and making a difference. Survey results from our research will guide the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) efforts to support Minnesota schools in addressing issues related to cannabis. Findings from our focus groups and one-on-one interviews of Minnesota residents and community leaders in the Twin Cities suggest that vital information about the legalization of cannabis for adult use is not reaching some communities. We hope to better educate Minnesotans about the legislation and its effects on population health in Minnesota.

We are excited to continue expanding the number and types of research projects that we conduct ourselves or fund other researchers to do. We thank the Minnesota State Legislature for designated funds for the Cannabis Research Center.