

# Youth Protection Efforts and Patient Education Initiatives

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Not for public distribution.



# Who is OPHDE and what do we do?

*The Office of Public Health, Data, and Education (OPHDE) is one of ten offices within the MCA.*

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- **Data collection and surveillance** – data sources include seed-to-sale tracking and registration data, large population surveys as well as special surveys of priority groups to measure patterns of cannabis use
- **Policy-based education** – focusing on state and local policies with public health and safety goals, for example, smoke-free policies and possession limits
- **Industry education** – includes the Responsible Vendor Training (RVT) program and new BeCannabisSmart industry newsletter
- **Public and consumer education** – mass-reach media as well as education initiatives tailored for priority groups such as new adult-use cannabis consumers



# Special considerations with youth media

*As a regulatory agency, we focus on responsible use education for adults 21+ (of legal purchase age) as well as medical cannabis patients. We partner with other agencies for youth prevention and use research and focus group testing to avoid potential unintended consequences.*

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## Key partners

- **Maryland Department of Health (MDH)**
- **Maryland Poison Center (MPC)**
- **Cannabis Public Health Advisory Council** – *studies the public health impact of adult-use cannabis legalization and makes public health recommendations on youth cannabis use and prevention, youth behavioral health and educational outcomes, educational programs including school-based initiatives, and public health campaigns. See*

*<https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/ohpetup/council/Pages/default.aspx>*



**Cannabis isn't candy.  
Keep it locked up.**

BeCannabisSmart

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Maryland  
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**Keep them safe.  
Lock up your cannabis.**

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**Cannabis can be toxic to kids, too.  
Store it safely.**

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Medical and Adult-Use Advisory Board Presentation

# Youth protection/prevention media

*A **multi-phase** youth protection campaign started in June 2024 (National Safety Awareness Month) to educate Maryland adults on **preventing accidental ingestions by storing cannabis up, away, and out of sight.***

*This fall, PSAs with medical experts were launched, reminding parents/caregivers about **health risks of accidental exposures and importance of safely locking cannabis in the home.***

*In early 2025, the same set of medical expert PSAs will address the importance of **‘talking to your teens’ to prevent underage use.***

*Finally, a campaign for middle- and high-school aged students is planned for 2025. Testing to identify messages that resonate with youth as well as placement strategies and tactics is planned for January.*

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View the PSAs at

<https://cannabis.maryland.gov/Pages/BeCannabisSmart.aspx>





# Additional youth protection media *live now*

To complement the PSAs (on TV, streaming platforms, and socials) the following billboards and paid social ads are also running.



**Protect kids and pets.  
Safely lock your cannabis.**

BeCannabisSmart | MCA MARYLAND CANNABIS ADMINISTRATION | Maryland DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH | Maryland Poison Center UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SCHOOL OF PHARMACY



**Kids are curious.  
Safely lock your edibles.**

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**Keep kids safe.  
Safely lock your cannabis.**

BeCannabisSmart | MCA MARYLAND CANNABIS ADMINISTRATION | Maryland DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH | Maryland Poison Center UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SCHOOL OF PHARMACY



**Keep cannabis safely locked --  
up, away, and out of sight from kids.**

Be safe. Be sure.

BeCannabisSmart | MCA MARYLAND CANNABIS ADMINISTRATION | Maryland Poison Center UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SCHOOL OF PHARMACY



**Prevent accidental cannabis poisonings.**

Safely lock your edibles.

LEARN MORE

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**Safe storage means safer kids.**

Safely lock your cannabis.

LEARN MORE

BeCannabisSmart | MCA MARYLAND CANNABIS ADMINISTRATION | Maryland DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH | Maryland Poison Center UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SCHOOL OF PHARMACY

Medical and Adult-Use Advisory Board Presentation

# Upcoming holiday focused youth protection media

*The holidays present additional risks to kids with visitors and travel. Billboards and social ads with holiday images will be running to remind adults to always replace cannabis to a safe, locked place. Sneak peak! Images NOT final!*



Maryland Cannabis Administration

We all love getting together. But when kids or pets are visiting your home, remember to keep edibles up, away, and out of sight.

**Keep your visitors safe this holiday.**

Secure your cannabis.



**BeCannabisSmart**



Safely  edibles.

BeCannabisSmart.

**Snoopers gonna snoop.**  
**Safely store your cannabis edibles.**



**BeCannabisSmart**



**Keep the holidays sweet.**  
**Store edibles out of reach.**

**BeCannabisSmart**





# Opportunities to complement youth protection/prevention media

The following policy efforts, regulations, and practices can help protect youth by reducing youth access.

- **Require lockboxes** or lockable units to be on display for sale at point-of-sale (POS)
- Re-stock and display **low THC products** in dispensaries
- Ensure dispensary **ID checks SOPs** are fully compliant and uniformly used
- Display MCA's responsible use education materials at POS
- Explore alternatives to youth-appealing product names and packaging

[Access digital fact sheet and digital poster at https://cannabis.maryland.gov/Pages/BeCannabisSmart.aspx](https://cannabis.maryland.gov/Pages/BeCannabisSmart.aspx)

**Hey Maryland DID YOU KNOW? BE INFORMED. BE RESPONSIBLE. BE SAFE. GUIDE TO ADULT-USE CANNABIS IN MARYLAND**

**Know the Laws**

- EMPLOYMENT**: Check with your employer about their policies. The new law does not prevent employers from drug testing employees.
- HOME GROW**: Adults 21+ can grow 2 indoor plants per household, out of view. Landlords and property managers may have restrictions.
- KEEP IN-STATE**: Cannabis is federally illegal. This means you can't:
  - Use or possess on federal property (parks, military bases, etc.)
  - Mail any cannabis product
  - Transport it across state lines
- RESALE**: It is illegal for anyone other than a licensed dispensary to sell cannabis.

**Use Responsibly**

- SMOKE-FREE SPACES**: Cannabis can't be smoked in public spaces, including streets and sidewalks, parks and schools, bars and restaurants, and on public transportation.
- SAFE STORAGE**: Keep all cannabis products:
  - Locked up
  - Out of reach and out of sight
  - In their original child-resistant packaging

**BeCannabisSmart: Helpful tips when visiting a Maryland dispensary**

**DO**

- Bring a valid, government-issued ID such as your driver's license, state photo ID, passport, military ID, or tribal card.
- Pay attention to the amount of THC in a product. Higher amounts aren't always better and can result in an uncomfortable experience. THC content is just one of many factors that produces the qualities of a 'high' and effects on the mind and body. Other cannabinoids and terpenes can contribute to these effects.
- Know the adult-use purchase limits:
  - 1.5 ounces of flower (pre-packaged flower, pre-rolls, budder, resin)
  - 750 mg of THC (edible gummies, chocolates, beverages, capsules, tinctures)
  - 2 plants or seedlings (two plants maximum allowed per household, indoors, and out of public view)
  - No limit on lotions, topicals, ointments, salves
- Ask if lockboxes or lockable stash bags are available for purchase. Low-cost lockboxes are also available online and from pharmacies. Always keep cannabis locked or up, away, and out of sight.
- Only purchase cannabis from licensed dispensaries to ensure products are regulated and lab tested. Tax dollars from licensed sales support community reinvestment, public health, business assistance, and other local efforts.

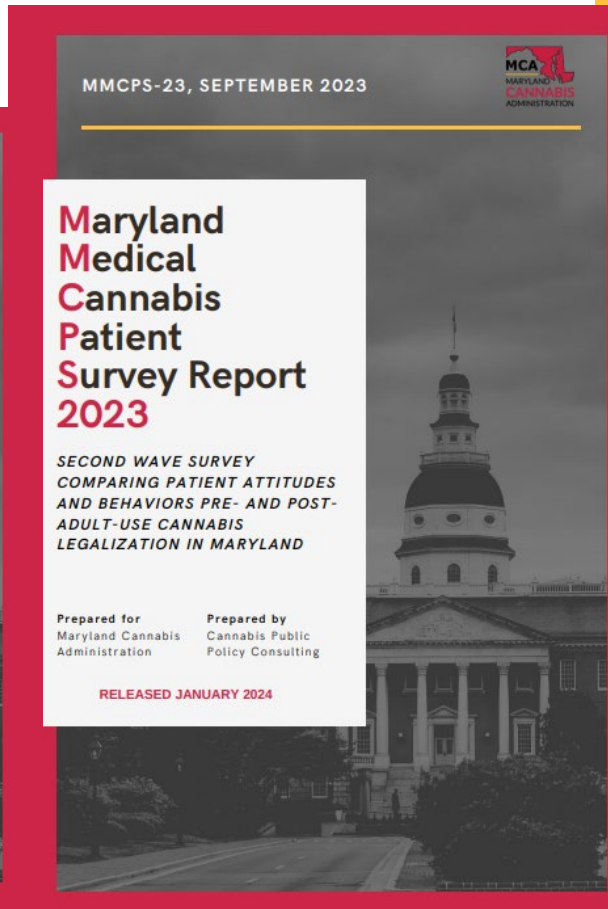
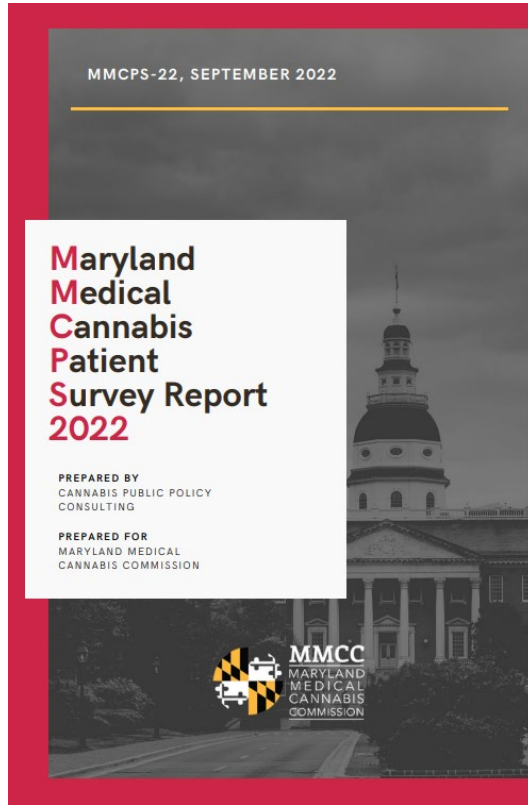
**DON'T**

- Attempt to purchase cannabis while intoxicated. Businesses are not permitted to serve customers under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or any impairing substance.
- Smoke, vape, or consume cannabis anywhere on the premises. Smoking cannabis is prohibited in all indoor and outdoor public spaces, including sidewalks and parking lots.
- Arrive right before closing. Businesses may not be able to complete a sale at or near closing time due to inventory controls.
- Purchase cannabis for or gift cannabis to persons under 21 years old. Adult-use cannabis is only legal for individuals 21 and over.
- Bring children with you. Businesses restrict entry to adult-use customers 21+ and certified medical patients and caregivers (note: children under age 8 may accompany a patient or caregiver).
- Take your cannabis out-of-state, even if it's to another adult-use state. Never use cannabis before or while driving. It's illegal and not worth the risk to your safety and others.

**BeCannabisSmart** NOT SAFE FOR KIDS 21+ with valid ID

# Patient education initiatives

The third 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Maryland Medical Cannabis Patient Survey (MMPCS) was just completed. After last year's report showed opportunities to continue to reduce stigma in healthcare settings, fact sheets were developed to encourage patient-provider conversations. *Where do you see educational needs?*



## SPEAKING TO YOUR PATIENTS ABOUT MEDICAL CANNABIS



A 2023 survey of medical cannabis patients from the Maryland Cannabis Administration (MCA) found:

- 1 in 4 patients are not comfortable discussing medical cannabis with their healthcare provider.
- Patients selected "educating healthcare providers" about cannabis as a top desired public education priority.
- Young adults (18-20), adults 55+, and patients who are pregnant or breastfeeding are the least likely to feel comfortable speaking to their providers about their medical cannabis use.
- Patients report perceived stigma is the highest when discussing cannabis with healthcare professionals, compared to friends and family.

### Why This Matters

- Cannabis use has clinical significance, including patient-specific precautions, potential drug interactions (e.g. supplements, prescription and non-prescription drugs, and alcohol) and impacts on anesthesia and post-surgical care.
- Healthcare providers can play a vital role in informing patients of potential cannabis-related medical benefits, as well as risks such as potential side effects, signs of problematic use or dependence, the dangers of cannabis-impaired driving, and the risks of consuming cannabis while pregnant or breastfeeding.
- Reducing stigma can improve communication between patients and their healthcare providers, resulting in optimal care and best possible patient outcomes.

### Resources

- Take a Course:** To gain a basic understanding of medical cannabis use and the endocannabinoid system, MCA recommends the TMCI Global-developed online course: "[Maryland Provider Education: Medical Use of Cannabis v3.0](#)". This course helps Maryland healthcare providers assess the evidence for treating patient conditions with medical cannabis, patient selection considerations, and specific precautions for medical cannabis use. Additionally, it addresses common administration methods and provides dosing guidance. Note: fee applies.
- Clinical directors** are employed by licensed dispensaries to provide guidance on differing strengths, ratios and concentrations, as well as product types and routes of administration. Clinical directors are trained on potential benefits, side effects and/or contraindications, and may be a helpful resource in planning patient care. Learn more at [Clinical Directors \(cannabis.maryland.gov\)](#).

## SPEAKING TO YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER ABOUT MEDICAL CANNABIS



A 2023 survey of medical cannabis patients from the Maryland Cannabis Administration (MCA) found:

- 1 in 4 patients are not comfortable discussing medical cannabis with their healthcare provider.
- Patients selected "educating healthcare providers" about cannabis as a top desired public education priority.
- Young adults (18-20), adults 55+, and patients who are pregnant or breastfeeding are the least likely to feel comfortable speaking to their providers about their medical cannabis use.
- Patients report perceived stigma is the highest when discussing cannabis with healthcare professionals, compared to friends and family.

### Why Talk to Your Healthcare Provider About Medical Cannabis

- Your Safety.** Cannabis use is important for your healthcare providers to know, as it can have potential drug interactions (e.g., supplements, prescription and non-prescription drugs, and alcohol) and impacts on anesthesia and post-surgical care.
- Better Care.** Maintaining an open dialogue with your healthcare provider can lead to better, more personalized care.
- Education.** Your healthcare provider can be a resource for you on medical cannabis, helping monitor its effects related to both your qualifying condition and overall health and well-being.

### What To Tell Your Healthcare Provider

- If you **consume cannabis** for any purpose (medical or non-medical).
- Your usual **method(s)** for consuming cannabis (i.e., smoking, vaping, edibles).
- The **symptoms or conditions** you use medical cannabis to treat or alleviate, especially mental health-related symptoms like anxiety, depression, or insomnia.
- If you are using cannabis to **reduce or replace** alcohol, tobacco, prescription medications, opioids, benzodiazepines, stimulants, psychedelics, or other substances.
- If you are interested in **stopping or reducing** your cannabis use.

**Consult Clinical Directors.** Clinical directors are employed by licensed dispensaries to provide guidance on differing strengths, ratios and concentrations, as well as product types and routes of administration. Clinical directors can address potential benefits, side effects, and/or contraindications, and can supplement conversations about cannabis that you have had with your healthcare provider. If you have questions, ask to speak with a clinical director at your dispensary (there is no cost).

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Once available, the MMPCS-24 report will be posted, <https://cannabis.maryland.gov/Pages/Reports.aspx>