



## Background

What we currently know about marijuana is this, it is a highly addictive substance made up of chemical components known as cannabinoids. One of these cannabinoids is known as Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), which is also found to have psychoactive effects. Currently no scientific evidence exists to show that THC itself has any medicinal value, or is a necessary component to enhance the medicinal benefit or value of other cannabidiols (CBD).

## Effects of Marijuana

The New England Journal of Medicine has published several short and long term effects stemming from the use of the marijuana plant. Short term effects include: impaired memory (which includes difficulty learning and retaining information); impaired motor skills; altered judgement; and paranoia and psychosis (particularly in high doses). As well as the following long term effects: addiction; altered brain development; poor educational outcome; cognitive impairment (with lower IQ); diminished life satisfaction/achievement; symptoms of chronic bronchitis; and increased risk of chronic psychotic disorders (i.e. schizophrenia).<sup>1</sup>

## Medical Marijuana

Statistics from states that have passed medical marijuana legislation enacting some form of legal use of the intact marijuana plant, suggest that: average users typically have no chronic illness; there is a dramatically higher incident of use in both regular adult users and new youth users (aged 12-17); and that this type of legislation has historically served as a stepping stone for recreational use.<sup>2</sup> Because of the relatively "newness" of some of these laws, it is anticipated that many of the long-term and social effects have yet to be seen.

## Utah Association of Local Health Departments Position

At this time the Utah Association of Local Health Departments opposes the use of the entire marijuana plant, or any marijuana extracts containing THC; and/or the legalization of marijuana. The UALHD does, however, encourage and support using the scientific method to research and study the components in marijuana to determine potential medicinal value.

### References

1. New England Journal of Medicine. *Adverse health effects of marijuana use*. June 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMra1402309>
2. Drug Alcohol Depend. *Medical marijuana laws in 50 states: investigating the relationship between state legalization of medical marijuana use, abuse and dependence*. January 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22099393>

### UTAH'S LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS:

BEAR RIVER HEALTH DEPARTMENT | CENTRAL UTAH HEALTH DEPARTMENT | DAVIS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT |  
SALT LAKE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT | SAN JUAN PUBLIC HEALTH | SOUTHEAST UTAH HEALTH DEPARTMENT | SOUTHWEST UTAH HEALTH DEPARTMENT |  
SUMMIT COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT | TOOELE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT | TRICOUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT |  
UTAH COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT | WASATCH COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT | WEBER-MORGAN HEALTH DEPARTMENT