Marijuana – No Longer Down in the Weeds

2017 GHSA Conference

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Recreational Marijuana Legalization in the United States

- **2012**: Colorado and Washington
- **2014**: Oregon, Alaska, and D.C.
- **2016**: California, Nevada, Massachusetts, and Maine

As of July 2017, 29 states have some form of legalized recreational or medical marijuana programs.
Marijuana and Driving

Marijuana – an old, but ever-changing drug

• Creating many new challenges
• Understanding / recognizing impairment is critical
• Expanded roadside detection training needed
• Legalization appears to be equating to more marijuana impaired drivers
Drug Categories Predicted by DREs
(2016 National Enforcement Evaluations)

1. Cannabis – 13,603 (Up from 10,880 in 2015)
2. CNS Stimulants – 10,543
3. CNS Depressants – 10,446
4. Narcotic Analgesics – 8,678

Source: DRE State Coordinator Annual Reports
2016 Cannabis DRE Opinions

• Top reported drug category in 27 states

• Top laboratory reported drug category in DRE NSTRC (MJ, THC & Carboxy):
  2013 - 14,377
  2014 - 17,189
  2015 - 16,389
Top Detected Drug Category by State 2014-2015

Green – Cannabis
Red – Depressants
Blue – Stimulants
Orange - Narcotics

Source: NHTSA NSTRC
Marijuana DUI’s in Oregon increased 163% in the six months following legalization.
Cannabis Effects

Vary with dose, potency, route of administration and experience of the user

- Relaxed inhibitions
- Euphoria
- Disorientation
- Altered time and space perception
- Lack of concentration
- Relaxation
- Alterations in thought process
- Paranoia
The 5 ng/mL THC Debate

How did we get 5 ng/mL of THC?

Research suggests that setting a cutoff level at less than 5 ng/mL THC for blood would fail to identify many drivers who smoked cannabis because THC is rapidly cleared from the blood.

Source: DuPont, Drugged Driving Research, 13
I drive better when I’m stoned, I’m slower, and that’s safer.

Hartman, Richman, Hayes, and Huestis
72% of cases involved one or more moving violations. (DTD – Disobeyed Traffic Device)
Reason for the Traffic Stop

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>&lt; 5 ng/ml</th>
<th>5+ ng/ml</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crash</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weave</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ImpTurn</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DTD</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail...</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equip</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lic Viol</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crim...</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our Challenges

- Recognizing MJ impairment at roadside
- Prosecutors and toxicology support
- Establishing impairment below 5 ng/mL THC
- Alcohol impairment vs Marijuana impairment
- Educating the public on the dangers of MJ and driving
- Preparing for “High’er Roads Ahead"
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