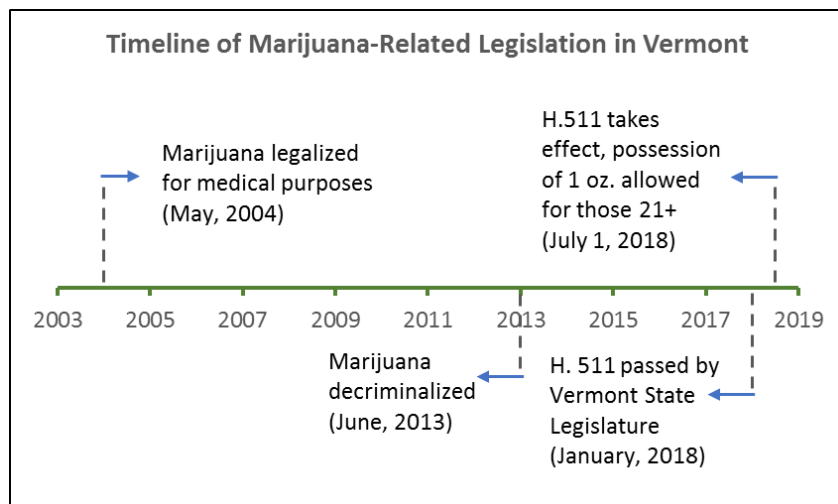


Marijuana Use in Vermont – Data Brief

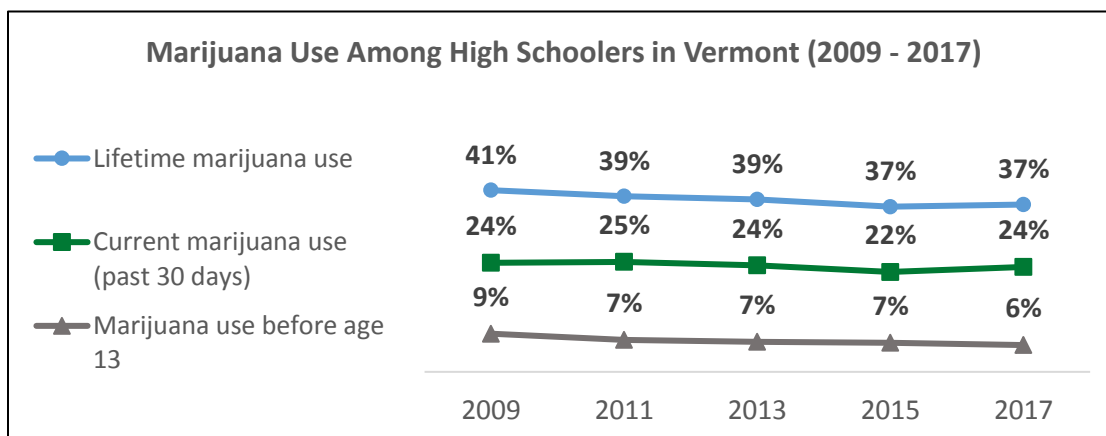
Vermont has experienced numerous legal changes with regard to marijuana in the past several years. In 2004, the Vermont legislature voted to legalize the use of marijuana for medical purposes, and in 2013, penalties for possession of 1 ounce or less were reduced to a fine. In July 2018, H. 511 went into effect, legalizing possession and private consumption for persons aged 21 years and older. Marijuana remains illegal at the federal level.



As attitudes toward marijuana use shift at the state and national levels, continued surveillance of the trends of marijuana use and any associated consequences is necessary. This data brief is meant to provide a comprehensive overview of marijuana use in Vermont including details about who is using it, how they are using it, consequences associated with use, and how marijuana use is addressed in the state-funded treatment system.

Marijuana Use Among Vermont High Schoolers

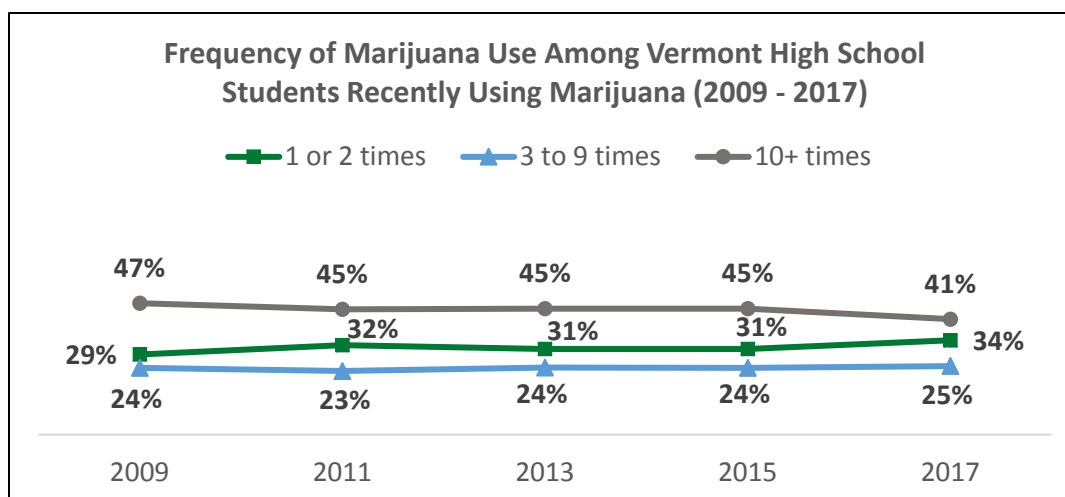
Nearly one quarter of Vermont high school students reported using marijuana in the past 30 days in 2017. Lifetime use was higher – 37% reported that they had ever tried marijuana, and 6% had tried it before age 13. Although the prevalence of current marijuana use (any past 30-day use) among high school students was the same in 2009 as it was in 2017, there has been a recent, statistically significant increase in use between 2015 and 2017 (22% to 24%). Significantly fewer students have reported lifetime use (41% to 37%) and use before age 13 (9% to 6%) from 2009 to 2017.



Source: Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

High school students who report using marijuana in the past 30 days are more likely to report frequent use. Over 40% of recent marijuana users reported using 10 or more times in the past month in 2017. The number of

students who said they used once or twice in the past month significantly increased from 2009 to 2017 (29% to 34%) while the number who used ten or more times has decreased during that time (47% to 41%). One in five current users used marijuana 40 or more times in the past month. This has been constant since 2009.

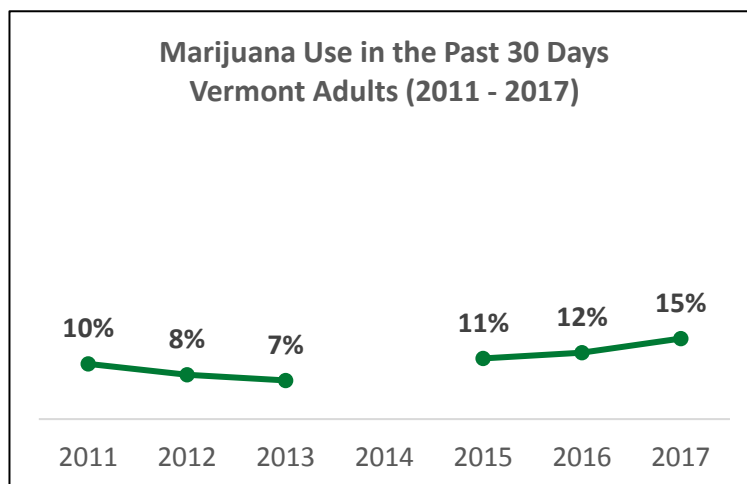


Source: Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

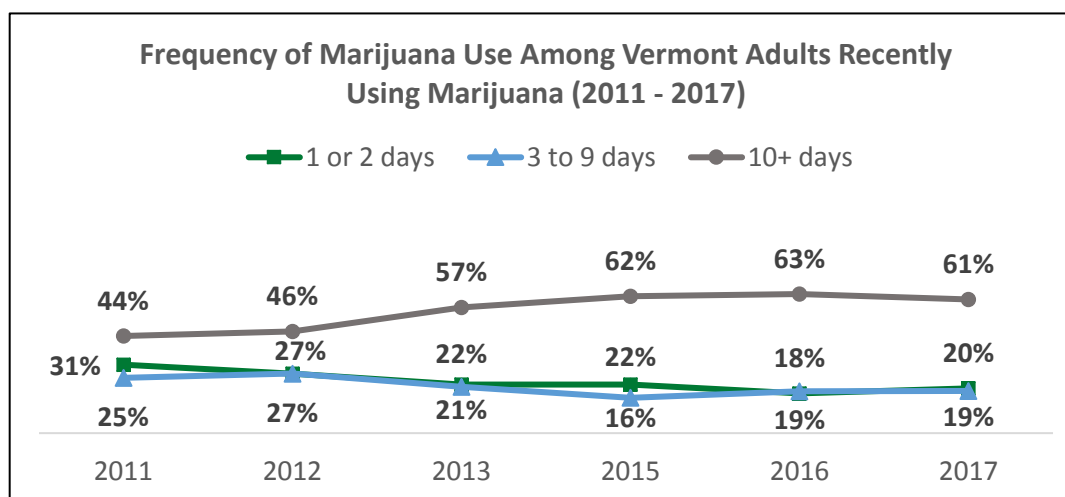
Marijuana Use Among Vermont Adults

Fifteen percent of Vermont adults reported using marijuana at least once in the past 30 days in 2017. Adult marijuana use decreased significantly between 2011 (10%) and 2013 (7%) before increasing each year from 2015 to 2017.

Among current marijuana users in 2017, 61% indicated that they had used marijuana regularly (defined as use on 10 or more days in the past month). Although this was a statistically significant increase compared to 2011 (44%), regular use has been steady since 2013 (57%).



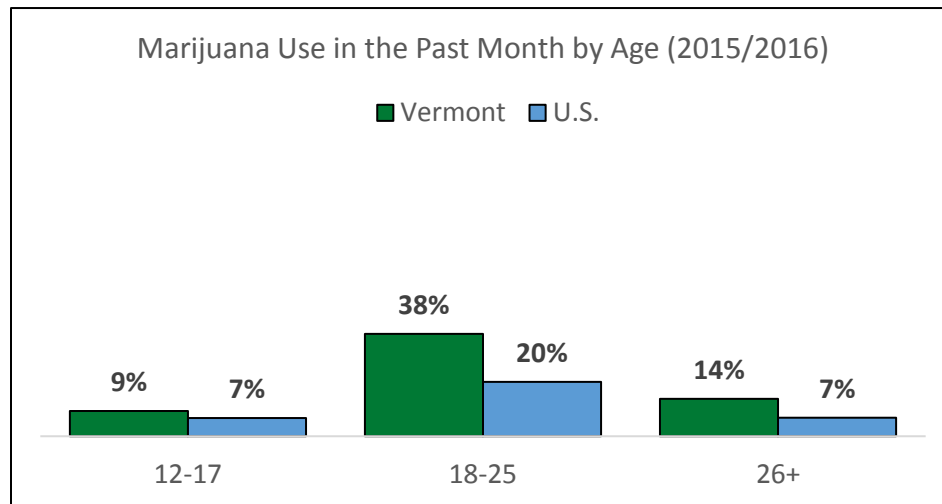
Source: Vermont Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)



Source: Vermont Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)

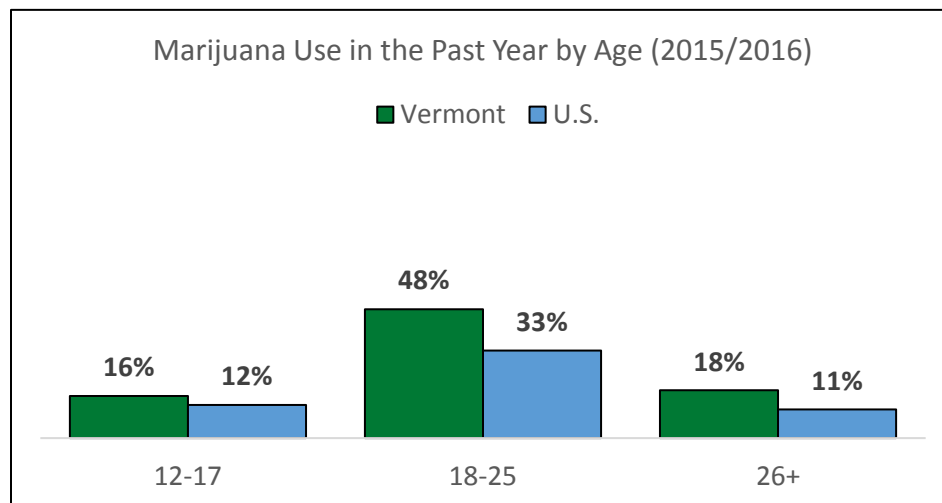
Marijuana Use in Vermont Compared to U.S.

Marijuana use was significantly higher in Vermont than the U.S. overall in 2015/2016. Nine percent of 12 to 17-year old Vermonters reported that they had used marijuana in the past month compared to 7 percent in the U.S. overall. Thirty-eight percent of Vermonters who were 18 to 25 years old and 14% of those 26 and older used marijuana in the past month. These rates were nearly twice as high as those for the U.S. overall where 20% of those were 18 to 25 years old and 7% of those 26 and older reported past-month marijuana use.



Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)

Similarly, past-year marijuana use was higher in Vermont than the U.S. in 2015/2016. Among 12 to 17-year olds, 16% of Vermonters reported using marijuana in the past year compared to 12% of those in the U.S. Nearly half of all 18 to 25-year old Vermonters used marijuana in the past year compared to one-third of those in the U.S. Past-year use was also significantly greater among those who were 26 and older as well – 18% of Vermonters used in the past year compared to 11% of those in the U.S. overall.



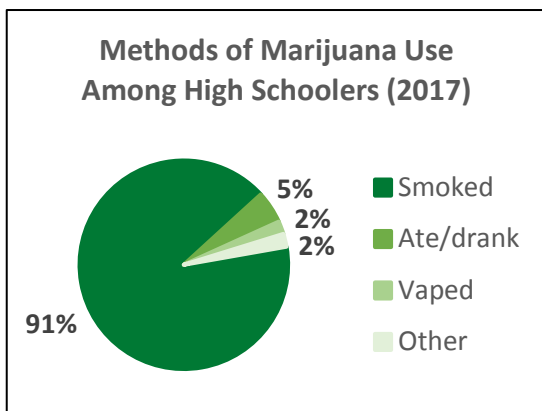
Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)

Vermont ranks in the top 10 for all age groups with respect to past-month and past-year marijuana use and ranks the highest for 18 to 25-year olds for both indicators compared to all other states. Vermont also had the fourth highest rate of past-month and past-year use among those who were 26 and older. Among those who were 12 to 17, Vermont has the sixth highest prevalence of past 30-day use and the seventh highest prevalence of past-year use.

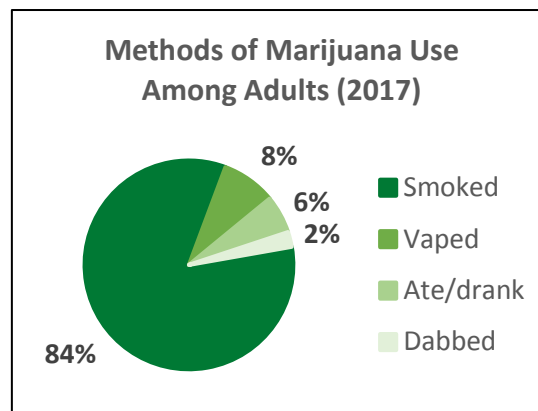
Primary Methods Used to Consume Marijuana Among Current Users

In 2017, Vermonters who reported using marijuana in the past month typically smoked it. Nine out of ten high school students who reported current marijuana use smoked it while 5% ate or drank it. Vaping (2%) and “other” (2%) methods were not commonly reported.

Eighty-four percent of adults who used marijuana in the past month typically smoked it while 8% vaped and 6% ate or drank it. Dabbing – the method of consumption where oils, concentrates, and extracts from the marijuana plant are smoked – was the least common method of use among adults who used marijuana in the past month (2%).¹



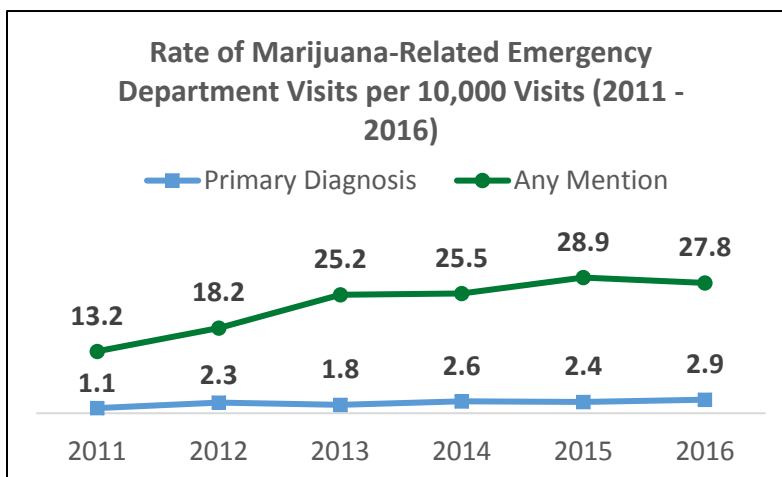
Source: Vermont YRBS



Source: Vermont BRFSS

Marijuana-Related Emergency Department Visits²

In 2016, there were 588 emergency department visits with any mention of a marijuana-related diagnosis among Vermont residents at Vermont hospitals – a rate of 27.8 per 10,000 visits. Sixty-one of these visits involved a primary marijuana-related diagnosis – a rate of 2.9 per 10,000 visits. Marijuana-related visits have more than doubled since 2011.



Source: Vermont Uniform Hospital Discharge Data Set (VUHDDS)

The rate of marijuana-related emergency department visits significantly increased among all age groups between 2011 and 2016. In 2016, 18 to 24-year olds had the highest rate of marijuana-related emergency

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/faqs/how-is-marijuana-used.html>.

² As per the [Monitoring Health Concerns Related to Marijuana in Colorado: 2016](#) report published by the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment, marijuana-related emergency department visits are defined as a visit with any mention of the following diagnosis codes: (ICD-9: 304.3, 305.2, 969.6, E854.1; ICD-10: F12.1, F12.2, F12.9, T40.7). Note: hospitals switched from ICD-9 to ICD-10 coding on October 1, 2015. As a result, comparisons between 2015/2016 and earlier years should be made with caution.

department visits (61.5 per 10,000 visits) and 25 to 44 years were the second highest (43.7 per 10,000 visits). Since 2011, the rate of marijuana-related visits among 18 to 24-year olds nearly doubled (33.8 per 10,000 visits), and the rate among 25 to 44-year olds nearly tripled (15.4 per 10,000 visits).

Rate (per 10,000 Visits) and Number of Marijuana-Related Emergency Department Visits by Age (2011 – 2016)													
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<18	9.7	13.2	13.5	12.4	10.7	10.3		39	54	52	46	40	37
18-24	33.8	43.6	49.0	52.6	49.4	61.5		108	136	143	145	133	155
25-44	15.4	23.4	39.0	39.7	49.4	43.7		98	151	243	243	301	257
45-54	*	14.2	25.7	23.8	34.5	28.6		*	41	72	65	95	77
65+	*	1.7	2.5	3.2	2.8	4.0		*	6	9	12	11	16

Source: Vermont Uniform Hospital Discharge Data Set (VUHDDS)

*Fewer than 6 visits – data has been suppressed.

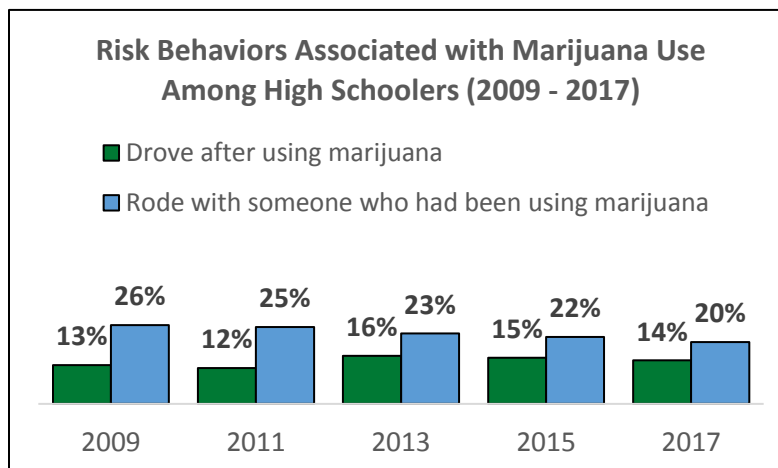
Marijuana Use and Driving

In 2017, there were 64 total fatal crashes resulting in 70 total fatalities in Vermont. Drugs were identified in 27 operators, out of which, Delta-9 THC – the psychoactive compound found in marijuana – was confirmed in 19. Each of these totals has increased since 2014 after initially decreasing from 2013 to 2014.

	Total Fatal Crashes	Total Fatalities	Operators Suspected as Driving Under the Influence of Drugs	Operators with Active Cannabis Confirmed
2013	64	70	18	11
2014	42	44	13	9
2015	50	57	20	11
2016	59	64	20	18
2017	64	70	27	19

Source: Vermont Highway Safety Alliance

In that same year, 14% of Vermont high school students reported that they had driven after using marijuana at least once in the past month while 20% said that they had ridden with someone who had been using marijuana at least once in the past month. Driving after using marijuana significantly increased between 2009 and 2013 (13% to 16%) and significantly decreased from 2013 to 2017 (16% to 14%). Riding with someone who has been using marijuana has consistently decreased since 2009 where 26% of high schoolers reported this activity.

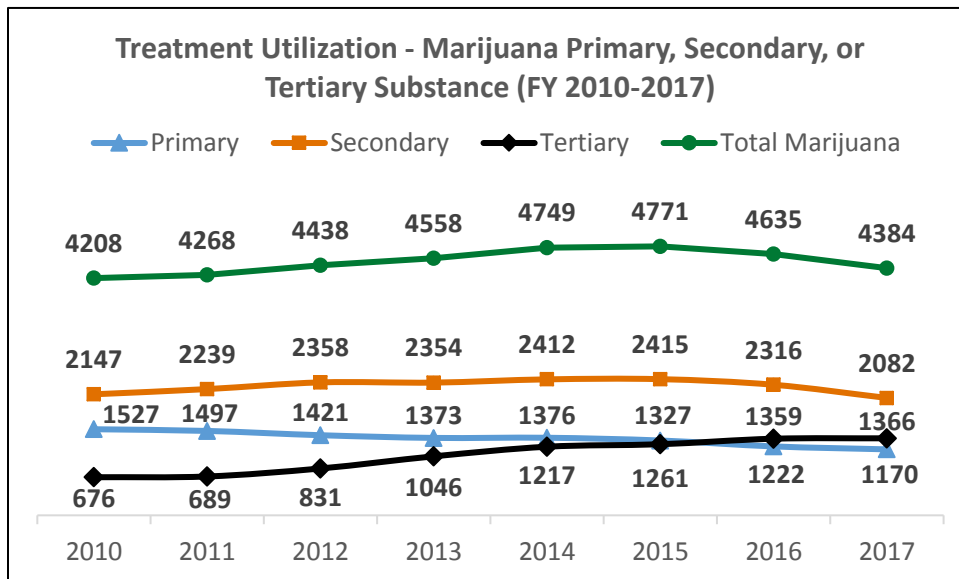


Source: Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

Twenty-six percent of Vermont adults who reported using marijuana in the past 30 days said that they had driven at least once within three hours of using in 2017.

Treatment Utilization

Of the 11,133 Vermonters who sought treatment through the state-funded treatment system in FY 2017, nearly 4,400 of those sought treatment for marijuana as a primary, secondary, or tertiary substance of abuse. Although the total number of Vermonters accessing treatment for marijuana has been constant from 2010 to 2017, fewer Vermonters are accessing treatment for marijuana as a primary or secondary substance of abuse. Instead, marijuana is included more frequently as a tertiary substance of abuse.



Source: Vermont Substance Abuse Treatment and Information System (SATIS)

*2017 data is preliminary.

More information about marijuana use in Vermont can be found by accessing the following links:

- [Governor's Marijuana Advisory Commission Education and Prevention Subcommittee: Report on Existing Primary Research on Key Health and Safety Endpoints](#)
- [Health Impact Assessment: Marijuana Regulation in Vermont](#)
- [Health Impact Assessment: Literature Review Update](#)
- [Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs Data and Reports Page](#)

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