

DESCRIPTION

Marijuana prohibition began 80 years ago when the federal government put a ban on the sale, cultivation, and use of the cannabis plant and remains illegal on the federal level. Americans continue to warm to legalizing marijuana, with 64 percent now saying its use should be legal. This is the highest level of public support the Gallup organization has found in nearly a half-century of measurement.¹ As of April 2018, 10 states and Washington, D.C., have legalized the recreational use of marijuana. An additional 20 states, along with U.S. territories Puerto Rico and Guam, allow the use of cannabis for medical purposes.² Minnesota's medical cannabis program began distributing medical cannabis to patients in July 2015 after registering two manufacturers: Minnesota Medical Solutions, LLC (operating in Minneapolis, Rochester, Moorhead, Bloomington) and LeafLine Labs, LLC (operating in Eagan, St. Cloud, Hibbing, St. Paul).³ Health care practitioners must be enrolled in the medical cannabis registry before certifying a patient's qualifying medical condition. Qualifying patients must also be enrolled in the medical cannabis registry to be eligible to legally purchase and possess medical cannabis.

HOW WE ARE DOING

The number of health practitioners registering with the Minnesota's medical cannabis program continues to increase. As of March 31, 2018, the registry system had 1,169 approved practitioners. At the same time, there were 9,435 patients actively enrolled in the patient registry, an increase of 19 percent from March 2017. Of all the Minnesotans in the medical cannabis patient registry, 72 percent of patients live in St. Paul or Minneapolis, 86.6 percent are white, 5.2 percent are black and 2.6 percent are American Indian. Intractable pain is the number one reason for participation in the program (experienced by 67 percent of patients).³

A recent study conducted by the Minnesota Department of Health published in March 2018, reported that a significant number of Minnesota medical cannabis patients with intractable pain reported pain reduction of 30 percent or more. The study also found that among patients who were using opioid medications when they started using medical cannabis, 63 percent reduced or eliminated opioid use after six months. Likewise, the results of a Health Care Practitioner Survey revealed that 38 percent of intractable pain patients reduced opioid medication (nearly 60 percent of these cut use of at least one opioid by half or more), 3 percent of patients reduced benzodiazepines and 22 percent of patients reduced other pain medications.⁴

DISPARITIES

Medical cannabis can only benefit Minnesotans who can afford to pay for it themselves. Health insurance does not cover the cost of medical cannabis, the costs of the medical certification appointment or annual registration fee. The registration fee of \$200 is reduced to \$50 if individuals receive CHAMPVA, Social Security Disability (SSD) benefits, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or participate in Medicaid or MinnesotaCare. The prescription costs are dependent on the type and amount of cannabis.

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Information to note

- Among patients who were using opioid medications when they started using medical cannabis, 63% reduced or eliminated opioid use after 6 months.
- There are disparities in access to medical cannabis - it can only benefit Minnesotans who can afford to pay for it themselves.

¹ McCarthy J. Record-high support for legalizing marijuana use. Gallup. 2017. http://news.gallup.com/poll/221018/record-high-support-legalizing-marijuana.aspx?g_source=Politics&g_medium=newsfeed&g_campaign=tiles. Accessed April 26, 2018.

² Gonzalez-Ramirez A. All the states where weed is legal. Refinery29. <https://www.refinery29.com/2018/04/196771/where-is-weed-legal-state-marijuana-laws>. Published April 20, 2018. Accessed April 27, 2018.

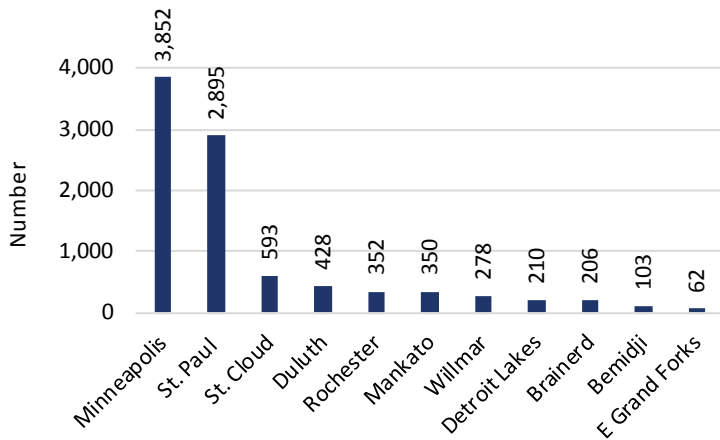
³ Minnesota Department of Health. Medical cannabis program update. <http://www.health.state.mn.us/topics/cannabis/about/update0418.pdf>. Published April 2018. Accessed April 26, 2018.

⁴ Minnesota Department of Health. Intractable pain patients in the Minnesota medical cannabis program: Experience of enrollees during the first five months. <http://www.health.state.mn.us/topics/cannabis/about/ipreport.pdf>. Published 2017. Accessed March 6, 2018.

WHAT RAMSEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS DOING

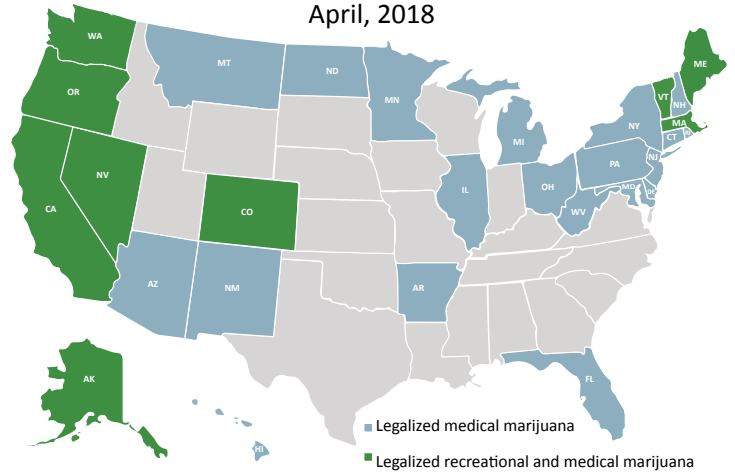
Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health provides data monitoring and reporting for this topic in order to better understand the overall health and current conditions in the community. The information may help inform community partners, policy makers, or county program leadership.

Active Patients in the Medical Cannabis Registry, Minnesota, March 31, 2018



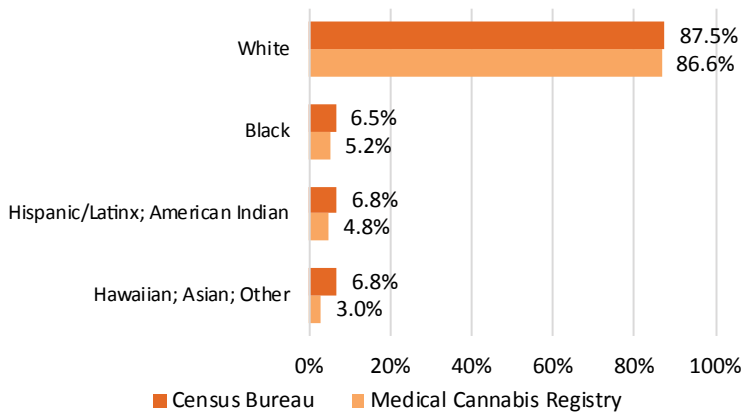
Source: Minnesota Department of Health.⁵

States Where Marijuana is Legal April, 2018



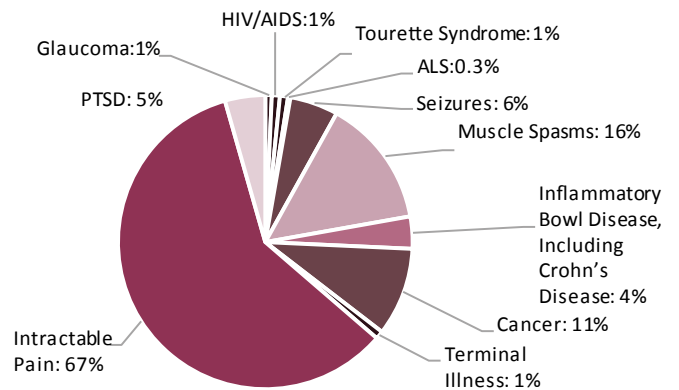
Source: Berke, J. and Gould, S. Marijuana legalization swept the US last year.⁶

Medical Cannabis Patients by Race/Ethnicity Compared to Overall State Demographics, March 31, 2018



Source: Minnesota Department of Health.⁷

Medical Cannabis Patients by Condition*



*Patients certified total more than 100% because 11.2% of the 7022 patients are currently certified for more than one condition; in this chart each certified condition is counted.

Source: Minnesota Department of Health Website.⁸

⁵ Source: Minnesota Department of Health. Medical Cannabis Program Update, April 2018. <http://www.health.state.mn.us/topics/cannabis/about/update1017.pdf>. Accessed April 2018.

⁶ Berke, J. and Gould, S. Marijuana legalization swept the US last year. <https://www.businessinsider.com/legal-marijuana-states-2018-1>. Accessed January 23, 2019.

⁷ Source: Minnesota Department of Health. Medical Cannabis Program Update, April, 2018. <http://www.health.state.mn.us/topics/cannabis/about/update0418.pdf>. Accessed April 2018.

⁸ Source: Medical Cannabis Program Update, October 2017. Minnesota Department of Health Website. <http://www.health.state.mn.us/topics/cannabis/about/update1017.pdf>. Accessed February 2018.