Background:

The cultivation, legalization, and patterns of individual use of cannabis in the United States is continually evolving. Additional states continue to enact medical and non-medical adult cannabis use legislation. Further, the potency of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) in cannabis continues to increase and new strains of cannabis with varying levels of THC and cannabidiol (CBD) are being introduced into the marketplace. The number of persons who use cannabis is also increasing, including those reporting frequent cannabis use in the United States. Recognizing the need to understand changes in cannabis use patterns, the potential health and social consequences of cannabis use, and public health strategies to monitor and respond have led to the development of a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Cannabis Strategic Plan.

The Division of Overdose Prevention (DOP) in the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) serves as the coordinating unit for cannabis activities across the agency and led the development of this Strategy. This Strategy outlines a vision for the next 3 to 5 years and serves as an update and expansion to the 2016 CDC plan to address emerging public health concerns related to cannabis. The Strategy also further describes actions that will foster a public health approach, improve messaging, and secure dedicated resources to address the health risks of cannabis.

Goal:

Monitor and address use of and exposure to cannabis and its associated health and social effects.
Strategic pillars

**MONITOR TRENDS**
- Analyze and expand existing data sources to monitor adult and youth medical and non-medical cannabis use. Examples of trends we intend to focus on include ED visits, mode of use, age of initiation, frequency of use, and polysubstance† use
- Develop new systems to assess cannabis use (product type, amount, mode, and frequency) and health and social outcomes

**ADVANCE RESEARCH**
- Evaluate how state, tribal, local, and territorial policies may affect use patterns and health outcomes
- Identify risk and protective factors for use and health and social outcomes

**BUILD STATE, LOCAL, AND TERRITORIAL (STLT) CAPACITY**
- Support peer-to-peer learning among STLTs
- Provide guidance for emergency responses due to emerging harms
- Advance application of a public health framework to STLT cannabis policy
- Build relationship with tribal coalitions for on-reservation considerations for cannabis policy

**SUPPORT HEALTH SYSTEMS AND HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS**
- Disseminate and integrate the evidence on benefits and harms of cannabis
- Develop healthcare provider education and tools
- Identify healthcare screening tools and protocols

**PARTNER WITH PUBLIC SAFETY, SCHOOLS, AND COMMUNITY COALITIONS**
- Engage with substance use prevention community-based coalitions
- Support development and implementation of evidence-based programs for schools and communities
- Identify public health and public safety data-sharing models

**IMPROVE PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS**
- Conduct public health message testing
- Develop and implement public education materials
- Evaluate campaigns

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**Physical and mental health, and social effects of interest:**
- Initiation and use
- Substance use disorder
- Poisoning
- Occupational injury
- Motor vehicle crash injury
- Employment
- Cardiopulmonary conditions
- Environmental exposure
- Developmental outcomes
- Prenatal and pregnancy complications

**Populations of interest:**
- Adolescents and young adults
- Older adults
- Infants and young children
- Pregnant/postpartum women
- Workers
- Racial and ethnic minorities
- People in poor health or with chronic conditions

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†Polysubstance drug use occurs with exposure to more than one drug, with or without the person’s knowledge.
Example Activities:

**MONITOR TRENDS**

**ADVANCE RESEARCH**
Evaluate how medical and nonmedical state, tribal, local, and territorial cannabis policies affect medication prescribing (including for opioids), health outcomes, and drug overdose.

**BUILD STATE, TRIBAL, LOCAL, AND TERRITORIAL (STLT) CAPACITY**
Facilitate technical assistance among STLT agencies on cannabis surveillance, identifying key indicators and best practices of existing surveillance systems that can inform cannabis surveillance.

**SUPPORT HEALTH SYSTEMS AND HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS**
Review the evidence of the effectiveness of cannabis as a medical treatment, such as for pain management and the treatment of opioid use disorder, and inform continuing medical education.

**PARTNER WITH PUBLIC SAFETY, SCHOOLS, AND COMMUNITY COALITIONS**
Offer opportunities to prevention community-based coalitions to learn about evidence-based substance-use-prevention strategies to address youth cannabis use.

**IMPROVE PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS**
Develop web content and fact sheets to educate the public, including populations such as youth, pregnant women, and workers, on the benefits and harms of cannabis use.

To learn more about marijuana and what CDC is doing, please visit: [www.cdc.gov/marijuana](http://www.cdc.gov/marijuana)