



# Palm Beach County Prevention Bulletin

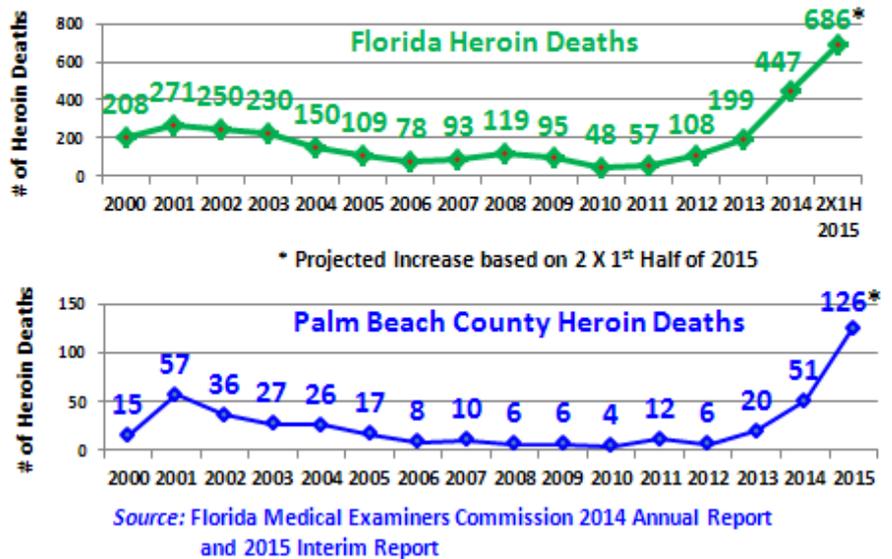


August 2016 Palm Beach County, Florida

## Opiate Epidemic of Deaths and Addiction Escalates

Based on the Florida Medical Examiners Commission Interim report for the first half of last year, the projected number of heroin-related deaths in Palm Beach County will be 126 in 2015. That toll represents a 147-% increase over the 51 heroin deaths locally in 2014 and an even more dramatic increase from the 20 such deaths in 2013 and 6 in 2012. There were also a projected 246 prescription opioid deaths linked to just 5 different narcotic pain relievers (specifically oxycodone, hydrocodone, methadone, morphine, and fentanyl) in Palm Beach County during 2015 with the medications ruled “a cause of death” in 70% of these opioid cases. However, it be likely that many of the projected 56 morphine deaths may actually be from heroin because the street drug rapidly metabolizes to morphine after being injected, snorted or smoked. It may also be presumed that most of the 72 fentanyl deaths are actually from non-pharmaceutical fentanyl analogues produced in foreign clandestine labs and sold as heroin or used as a heroin adulterant or even as counterfeit pills including fake “Xanax” or “oxycodone” pills distributed in the illicit drug market. Palm Beach County is also experiencing 500 hospital opiate overdose poisonings annually involving heroin or a prescription opioid. Most all of the hospital ODs are reversed by naloxone and thus non-fatal.

### Number of Heroin Deaths in Florida & Palm Beach County: 2000 to 2015\*



Addiction treatment admissions with heroin or a prescription opioid as the primary drug reported by clients in Palm Beach County totaled 2,460 in 2015 or 29% of all admissions including those with alcohol as the primary substance. The 1,143 heroin clients in 2015 represented a 100-% increase from the 571 in 2014. Yet, the 1,317 clients with a prescription opioid as their primary drug remained relatively stable with the 1,225 from the previous year or a 7½-% rise. These increases are in line with the national opiate pandemic with 80% of new heroin users being already addicted to a prescription opioid often first obtained with a legal prescription from a physician. Among the 2,460 opiate treatment clients in 2015, 55% were male. Less than two-tenths of 1% were below the age of 18 while 22% were aged 18-25 years and 47% were 26-34 years and 31% were aged 35 and older. Injecting drug use was reported by 65% of the 2015 opiate clients who reported a primary route of administration.

The percent of Palm Beach County crime lab cases for heroin increased from 15.5% of all drugs in 2015 to 21.5% in the first half of 2016. Prescription opioid crime lab cases remained relatively stable going from 10.2% in all of 2015 to 10.9% in the first 6 months of 2016.

# Palm Beach County Prevention Bulletin

## One in Two Have Tried E-Cigarettes

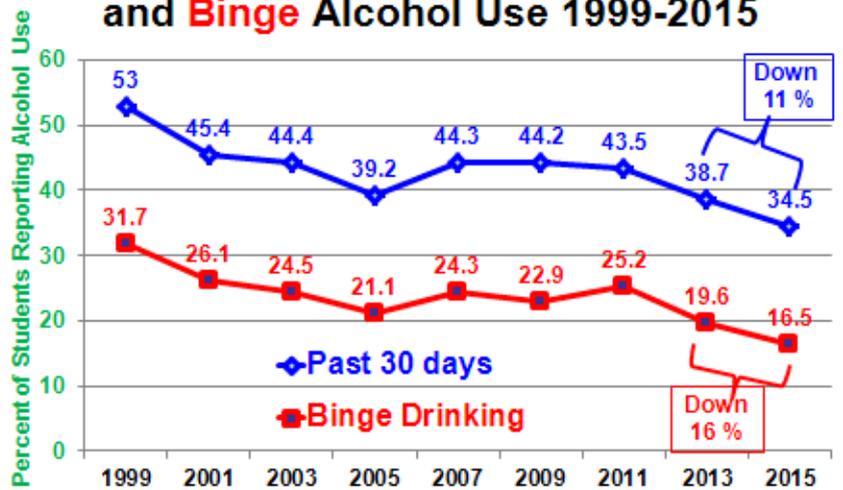
The 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey (YRBSS) reveals that 50% of Palm Beach County high school students have tried e-cigarettes or other vaping products at sometime in their lives and 27% had done so in the past month. The lifetime rate is second only to ever having used alcohol and 9% higher than those acknowledging ever having smoked marijuana. A critical concern is that young non-cigarette smokers who use e-cigarettes will become addicted to nicotine and turn to smoking of tobacco products. Vaping is also a route of administration for many drugs ranging from marijuana products such as “budder” to numerous novel synthetic substances making first time use easier than smoking or injecting.

More than twice as many Florida high school students and three times as many middle school students are current users of e-cigarettes than regular cigarettes. The 2015 Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS) reveals that 16% of high school students and 6% of middle school students have used e-cigarettes in the past 30 days as compared to 7% of high schoolers and just 2% of the middle school students who had smoked regular cigarettes. The 2015 YRBSS expands the question of e-cigarette use to include e-hookahs, vaping pipes or pens. Thus, its results report even higher rates of current vaping use yet at the

## Underage Drinking Still Declining

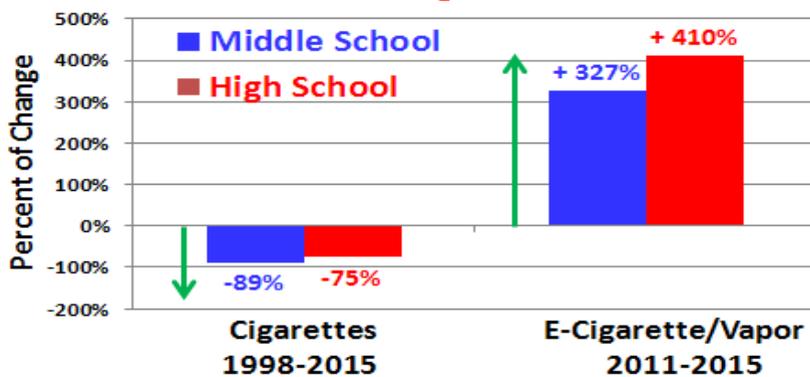
Palm Beach County high school students continue to report declining rates of alcohol use and binge drinking. The 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey released in June 2016 reports current use of alcohol in the past 30 days decreased 11-% from 38.7% in 2013 to 34.5% in 2015 continuing a nearly 10 percentage points decline since 2009. Rates of binge drinking of 5 or more drinks in a row also declined 16-% from 19.6% in 2013 to 16.5% in 2015. Results from the 2016 Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey are anticipated to be released by December 2016.

### Percent of Palm Beach County High School Students Reporting Past 30-Day and Binge Alcohol Use 1999-2015



Source: US CDC&P: Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System Survey

### Percent of Change in Prevalence Rates of Cigarette and E-Cigarette/Vapor Devices Among Florida Middle and High School Students



Source: 2015 Florida Youth Tobacco Survey

same ratio to cigarettes with 22% of high school students and 10% of middle school students having used a vaping device in the past month as compared to regular cigarette use by 10% of high schoolers and 4% of middle school students. Use of electronic smoking devices has increased significantly in recent years. The 2015 FYTS reports while cigarette use among Florida youth has decreased in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, e-cigarette use and other vaping devices has increased 327-% among middle schoolers and 410-% among high school students between 2011 and 2015.

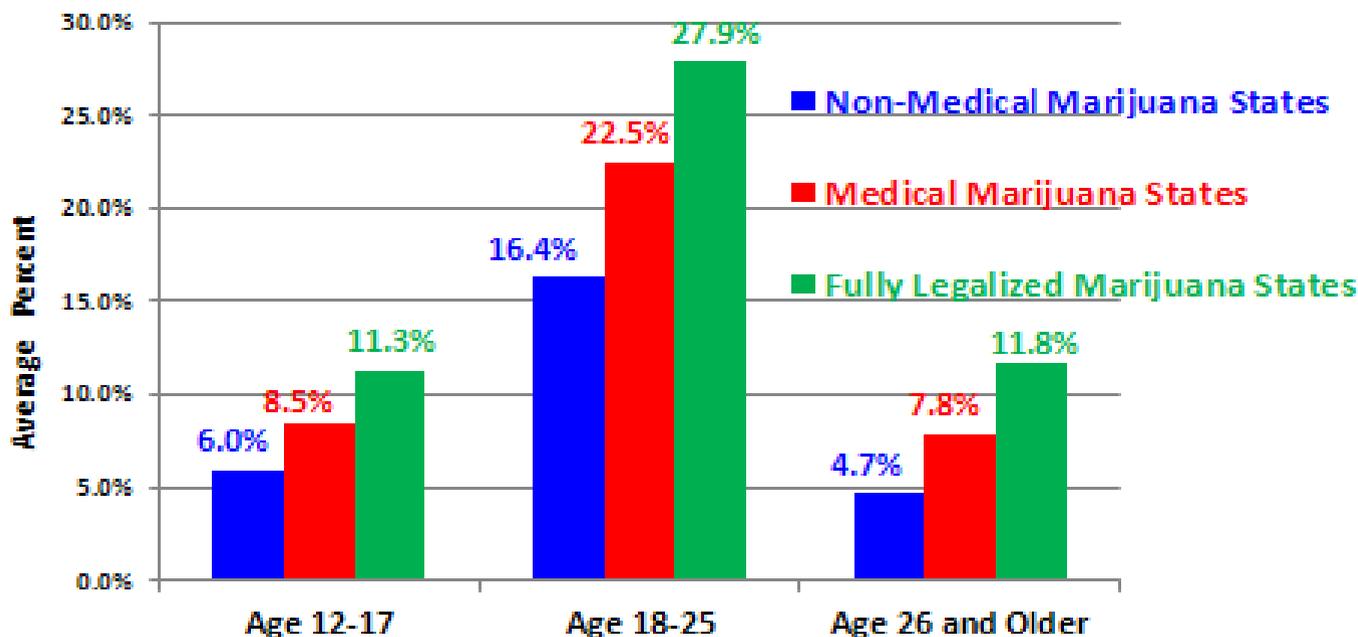
# Palm Beach County Prevention Bulletin

## The Relationship of Medical Marijuana Laws and Non-Medical Abuse Among Adolescents

As Floridians debate a proposed constitutional amendment expanding the use of marijuana for medical purposes on the November 2016 ballot, a key point of contention will be what impact would such a measure have on non-medical use of pot among adolescents to get high. There have been conflicting studies reporting changes in marijuana use among youth following enactment of medical marijuana laws and ballot initiatives. Yet, it appears that marijuana use and state medical marijuana laws are related. Data from the *National Survey on Drug Use and Health* are shown in the graph below. It illustrates the higher average percent of marijuana use reported by (1) youth, (2) young adults, and (3) adults aged 26 and older in states

with legal medical marijuana as compared to non-medical marijuana states. Within each of the three age groups marijuana use in the past 30 days is higher in states with legal medical marijuana and even higher still in states with full legalization for both medical and non-medical use. Most reviews on the impact of adopting legal medical marijuana show an increase in non-medical use in the first year following the enactment of such laws and then stabilization in prevalence rates in the years following. None-the-less an important issue to address in considering any changes in marijuana laws is the potential lifelong mental health and drug dependency implications of the drug's use among adolescents and particularly among those who initiate use by age 14 or younger.

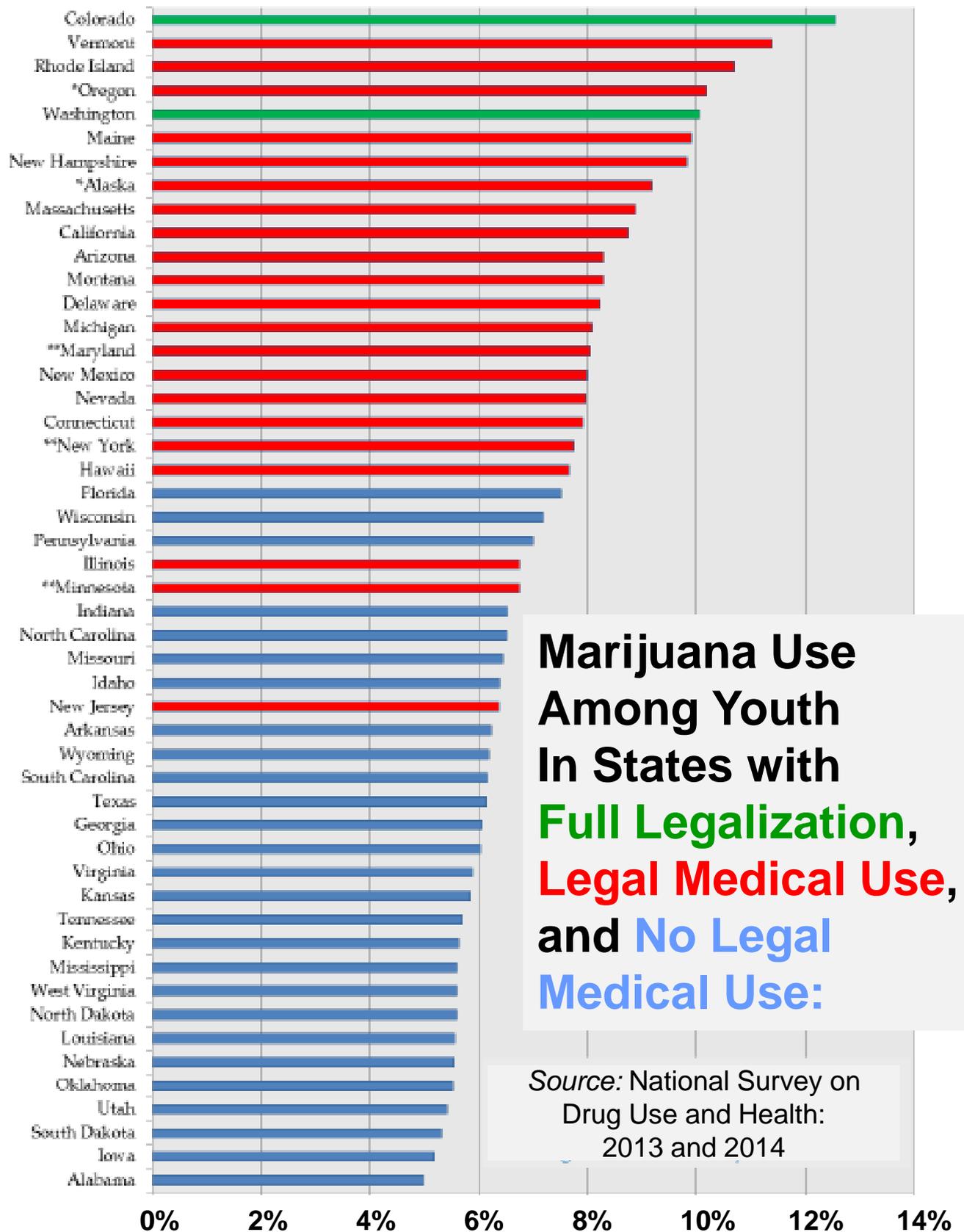
### Average Percent of Past 30-Day Marijuana Use By State's Medical and Full Legal Status Among Youth, Young Adults, and Adults: 2013 and 2014



Source: SAMHSA - National Surveys on Drug Use and Health 2013 & 2014 State Estimates

# Palm Beach County Prevention Bulletin

## Past Month Usage by 12 to 17 Years Old, 2013/2014



Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health: 2013 and 2014