



Drug Trends in Indian Country – Cannabis and Youth Healing to Wellness Courts (YHWCs) – Part I

September 11, 2025

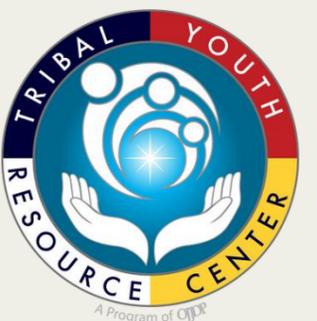
Drug Trends in Indian Country: A Three-Part Series

Part I: Participants will learn about recreational and medical marijuana and the main debates surrounding them. They will also explore current cannabis trends, stronger THC levels, and how today's marijuana often includes other substances.

Part II: This section will help participants understand the serious health risks of marijuana, THC, and related substances for adolescents. It will also cover usage patterns among American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) youth and important considerations for testing THC and Delta-8 in Youth Healing to Wellness Courts (YHWCs)).

Part III: Participants will learn about the debates surrounding legalized recreational and medical marijuana and how legalization can affect youth in YHWCs, both positively and negatively. They will also explore the important effects of legalization on eligibility rules, policies, and procedures in YHWCs.

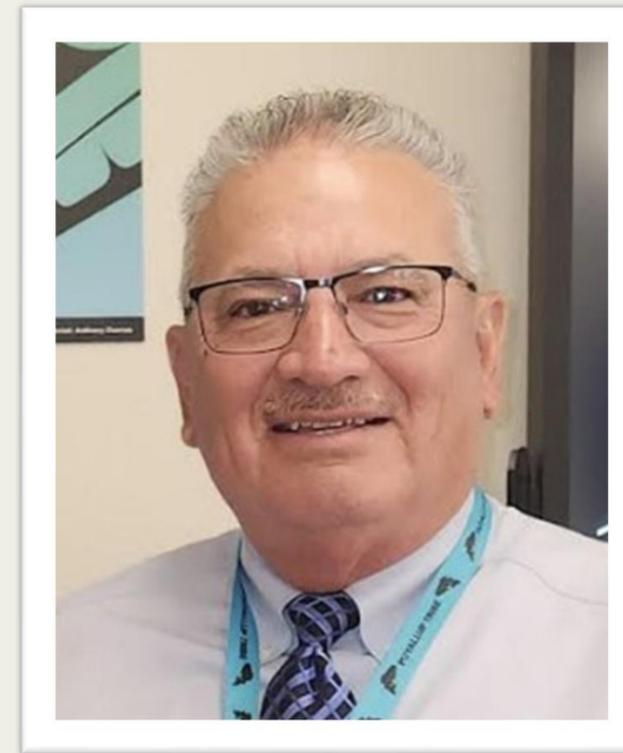
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Presenters

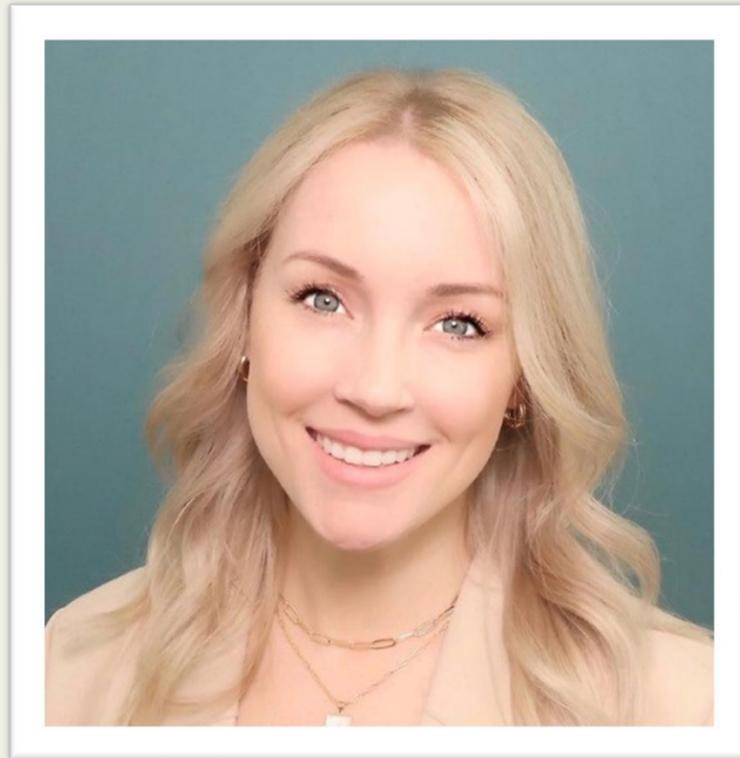


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Wellness Court
Training and Technical
Assistance Team Lead
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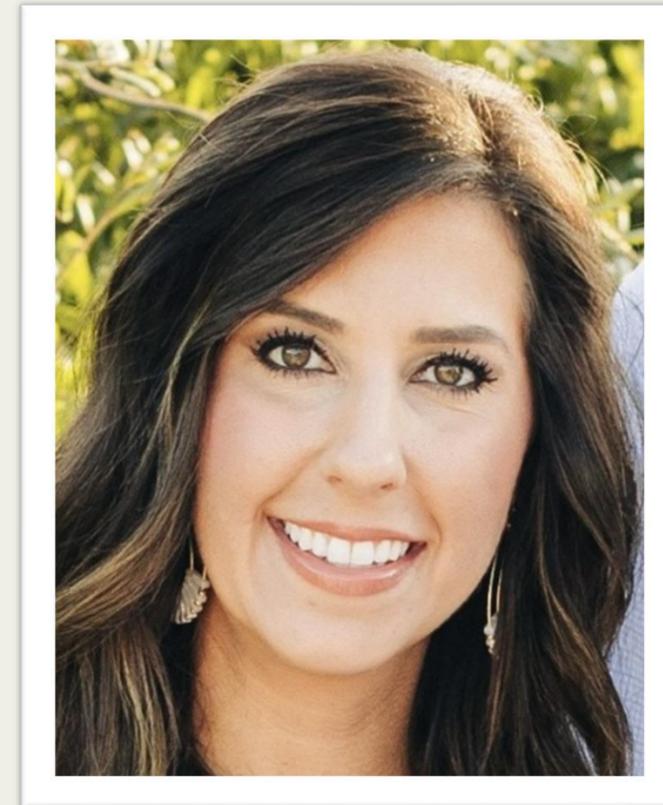


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Learning Objectives

Participants' knowledge on the following will be increased:

1. Recreational and medical marijuana and the surrounding debates
2. The current trends in cannabis related products
3. Today's THC potency
4. The poly-substance nature of today's marijuana and related products



Not Your Parents' Marijuana

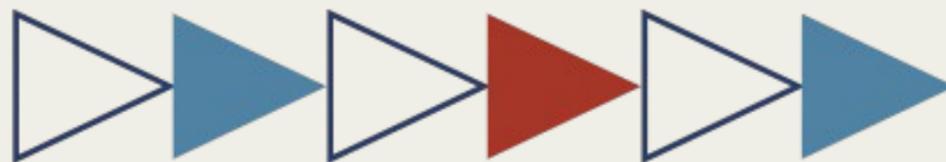
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Polling Question #1



Input will be anonymous.



Teen Marijuana Poisonings Have Skyrocketed

Recreational cannabis is now legal in nearly half of U.S. states

It comes with some health risks for children and adolescents

Over the last 20 years, cannabis cases have flooded hotlines at U.S. Poison Control Centers

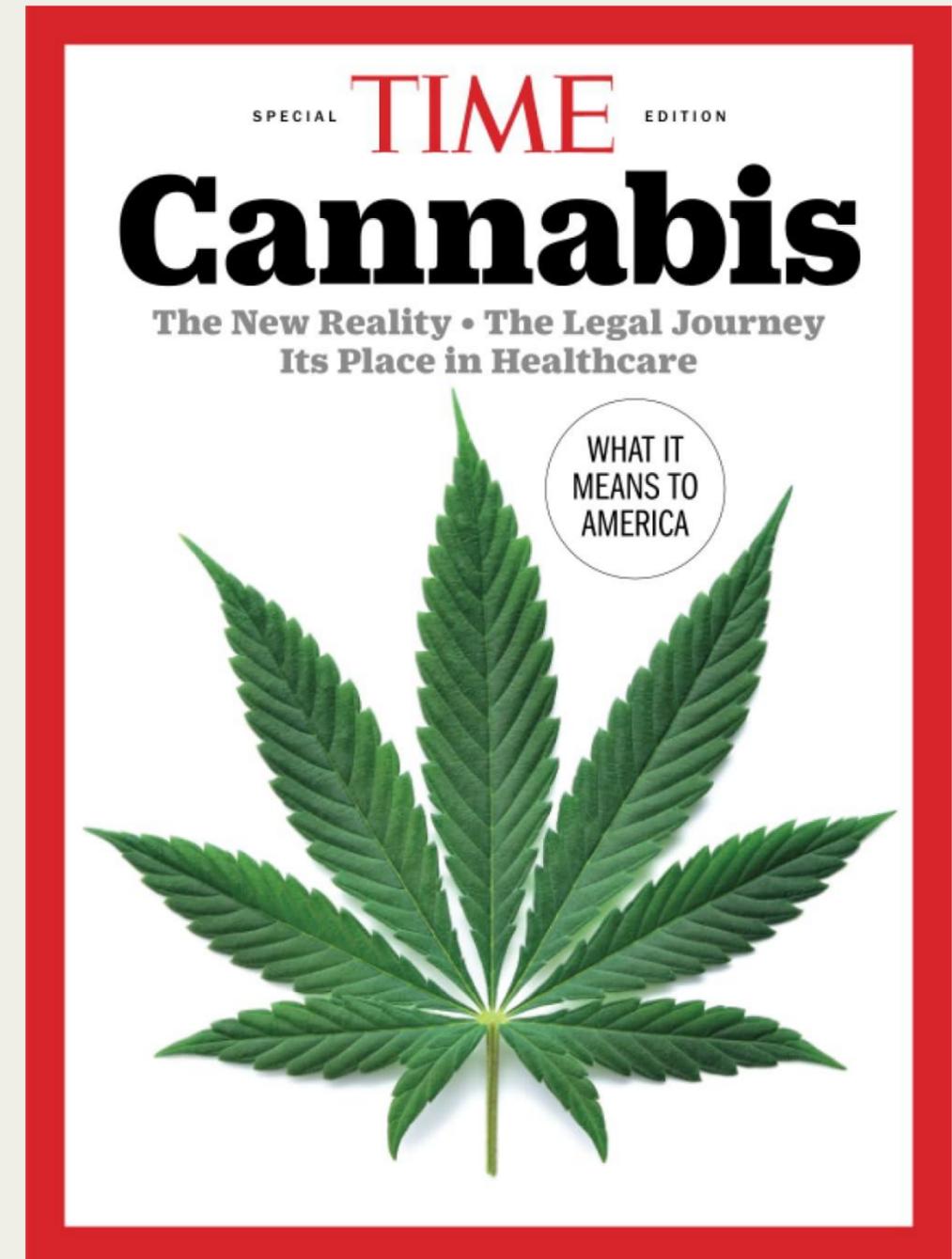
- Between 2000 and 2020, found a 245% increase in calls related to marijuana
- The biggest rise came between 2017 and 2020, particularly with cases involving edibles

Young people have increasingly used cannabis in newer forms, including vapes and edibles

- With edibles, it can be difficult to manage your dose
- Edibles may take hours to kick in – which means kids may unwittingly eat more to try and feel their effects

Kids may face greater mental health risks from marijuana, such as worsened depression and anxiety, poor attention, memory problems, and cannabis use disorders, than adults, as their brains are still developing

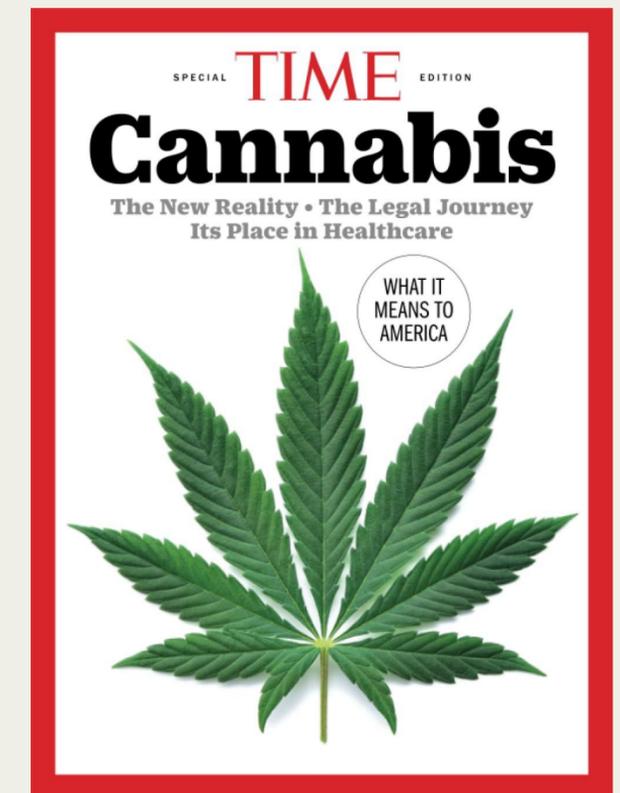
Cannabis can even land children in the hospital with cannabis hyperemesis syndrome and psychotic episodes



Example: Can Cannabis Help with Digestive Ailments?

There is growing interest in the use of medical marijuana for gastrointestinal disorders (inflammatory bowel disease (IBDs), Crohn's, and ulcerative colitis (UC))

- 2018 Study
 - ~1/3 of teens and young adults with IBD used marijuana and more than half endorsed its use for pain relief
- Cannabis as an adjunctive therapy, not a replacement for medications
- The greatest symptom benefit is from a combo of THC and CBD
- However, research is limited/still many unanswered questions
- There are potential drawbacks for using cannabis for GI disorders



Marijuana is a Schedule I Drug under the Federal Controlled Substances Act (CSA)

The Controlled Substances Act (CSA)

- Its five schedules apply to drugs and substances regulated under federal law
- Schedule I drugs are those that have the following characteristics:
 1. The drug or other substance has a high potential for abuse
 2. The drug or other substance has no currently accepted medical treatment use in the U.S.
 3. There is a lack of accepted safety for use of the drug or other substance under medical supervision

Marijuana (“Marihuana”) is considered a Schedule I drug

[T]he terms “marihuana” and “marijuana” mean all parts of the plant Cannabis sativa L., whether growing or not; the seeds thereof; the resin extracted from any part of such plant; and every compound, manufacture, salt, derivative, mixture, or preparation of such plant, its seeds or resin.

21 USC § 802(16)

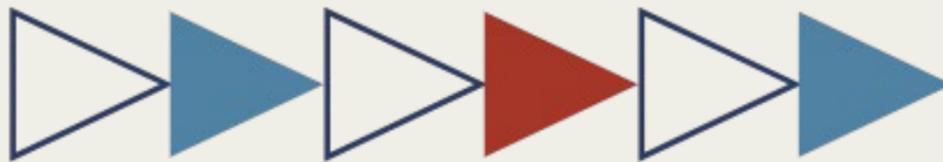
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Polling Question #2



Input will be anonymous.



Cannabis

Cannabis

- The term “cannabis” refers to a genus of flowering plants in the family - Cannabaceae
- Cannabis plant contains more than 421 chemicals of which 61 are cannabinoids
- The most psychoactive is called: **delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)**
- THC is found in the flowering heads (buds), less in leaves and stems
- Once the flowering head is dried and cured the THC acid activates and becomes THC

Types:

1. Sativa and Indica containing significant amounts of psychoactive phytocannabinoids are often cultivated for recreational and medicinal use
2. Ruderalis – contains negligible amounts of psychoactive compounds (often cultivated for seeds and fiber (hemp) and not considered illegal)



Cannabis sativa L. general aspect (a); inflorescence (b); seed (c); leaf (d); stem (e)

Today's Cannabis Related Products

Cannabis Synonyms:

- Dagga, Marijuana, Bhang, Grass, Ganja, Pot, Weed, Mary Jane (hundreds of terms)

Commonly used street terms:

- BLUNT – cannabis with tobacco
- JOINT – cannabis cigarette
- 710 – THC oil (often used while vaping or “greening out”)
- Dabs/Wax – Butane Hash Oil (BHO) refinement for THC concentrate

In 2022, adolescents aged 12-17:

- 77% smoked THC
- 60% vaped THC
- 36% were eating or drinking the drug
- 23% were using dabbing waxes and concentrates



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Today's Cannabis Related Products (cont.)

Cannabis/THC

- A depressant, a stimulant, or a hallucinogen?
- Affects the central nervous system and slows brain function
- Alters user's perception of reality

Routes of Administration

- Smoking and inhaling through the lungs
- Vaping

Detection

- Urine test
- Saliva test
- Follicle test



Colorado State Trooper Ron Krasnisky shows the department's oral fluid drug screen testing device, used during a pilot program that ended earlier this year. The system uses a saliva collection device to test impaired drivers for marijuana use as well as other drugs.

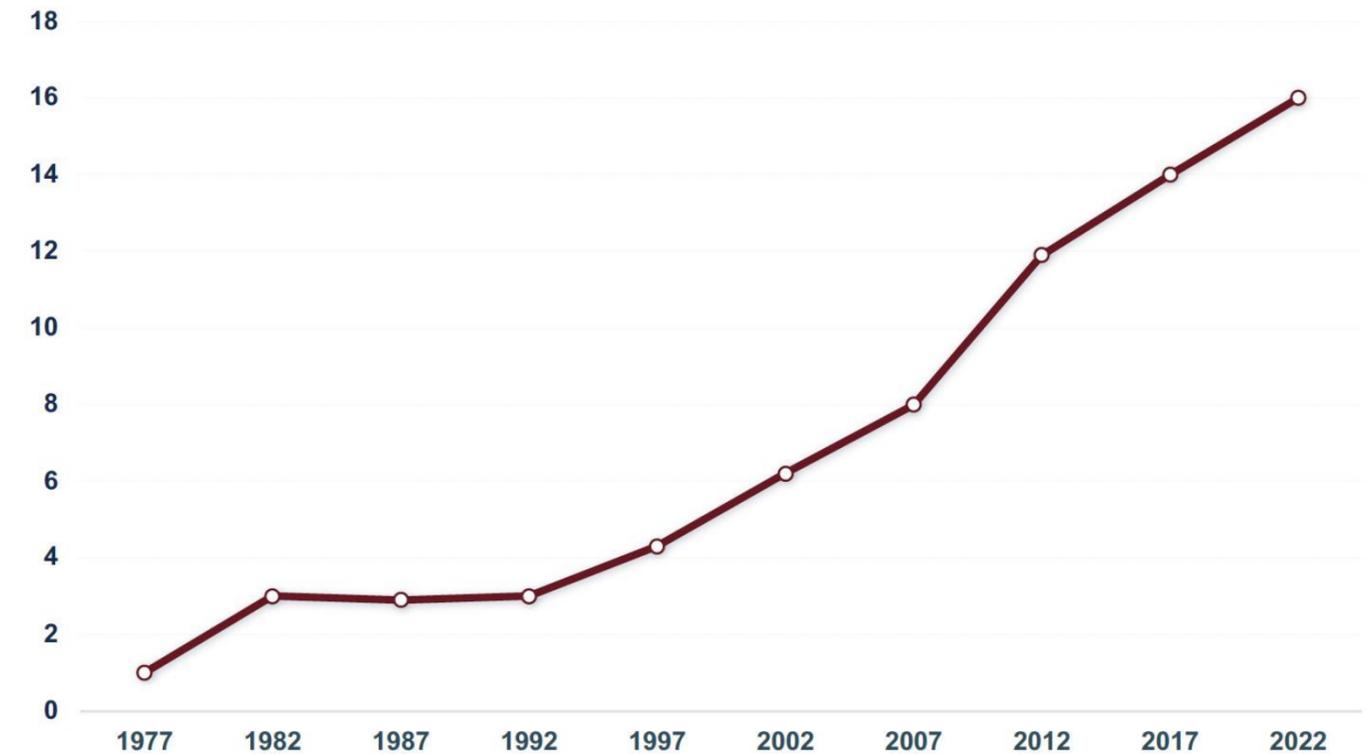
“Not Your Parents Marijuana”

According to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA):

- THC potency in leafy marijuana averaged around 16 percent in 2022
- This is a 29 percent increase from samples tested in 2021
- This is many times higher than found in marijuana in past decades

Marijuana Potency

Figure 20: Average Delta-9 THC Potency in Marijuana, 1977-2022



Source: University of Mississippi Marijuana Potency Monitoring Program

— Delta-9 THC in Plant Material

“Not Your Parents Marijuana” (cont.)

According to a Psychology Today article, the higher the potency, the higher the risk for the user:

- High-potency THC products are more likely to cause dependency, cognitive impairments, and adverse effects, including anxiety, paranoia, and psychosis, especially in vulnerable populations or heavy users
- Studies have explored the relationship between higher THC doses and health outcomes, including cannabis use disorder (CUD), cardiovascular issues, psychosis, depression, suicide, violence, and impaired driving
- Regular use of high-potency cannabis is associated with an increased likelihood of dependence, craving, and withdrawal symptoms



Example from company website:

“Butane hash oil (BHO) is a powerhouse in the cannabis concentrate market, renowned for its high THC concentration, which can reach up to 90%.”

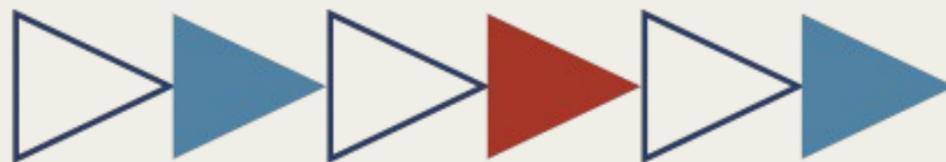
“Not Your Parents’ Marijuana” (cont.)



Polling Question #3



Input will be anonymous.



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Poly-Substances Marijuana Mixtures

Terms for Poly-substances using cannabis:

- A-bomb or Atom Bomb, cannabis mixed with heroin
- Amp joint, cannabis mixed with fentanyl
- B-40 cigar mixed with cannabis and malt liquor
- Banano, cannabis mixed with cocaine
- Basuco, cannabis mixed with pink cocaine
- Bazooka, cannabis mixed with crack cocaine
- Canade, cannabis mixed with heroin
- Candy blunt, cannabis dipped into cough syrup
- Chronic, cannabis mixed with crushed crack cocaine
- Fry/Fry sticks, dipped cannabis joints into PCP and formaldehyde
- Ryno cannabis, mixed with Rohypnol
- Kitty Flipping, cannabis mixed with ketamine, amphetamine and ecstasy
- Snow cones, cannabis mixed with amphetamine



One of the more common mixtures of marijuana is MDMA-laced weed.

Poly-Substances Marijuana Mixtures (cont.)

New cannabis/THC products enter the market daily using marketing that “mainstreams” use, access and popularity among adolescents



Pre-rolled packs with higher potency



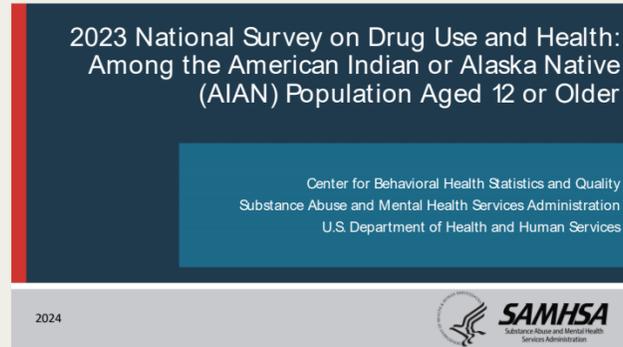
Look alike snack candy



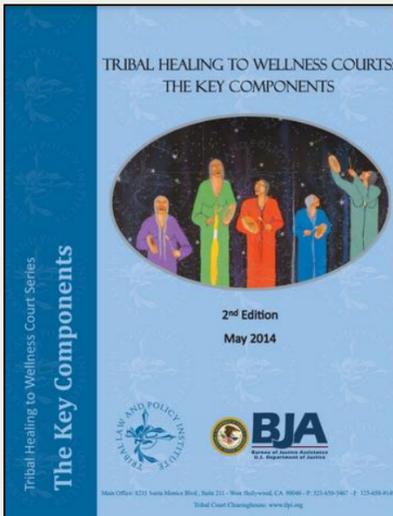
Young people may be swapping out joints, pipes or bongs for vape pens

Vape pens have been found to contain cannabinoids such as tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and spice (synthetic weed, also known as K2 or Spice, a chemically made product that's meant to mimic the effects of cannabis on the body) – and which can be more potent than cannabis

YHWC Resources



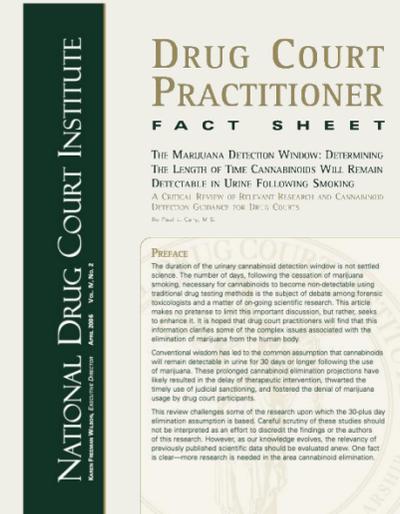
2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Among the American Indian or Alaska Native (AIAN) Population Aged 12 or Older



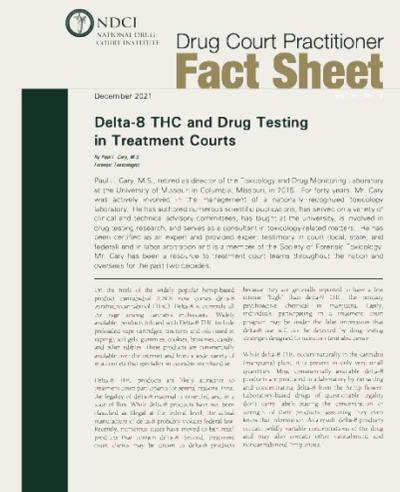
The Tribal Healing to Wellness Court Key Components (2014)



The National Tribal Health Agenda (2016)



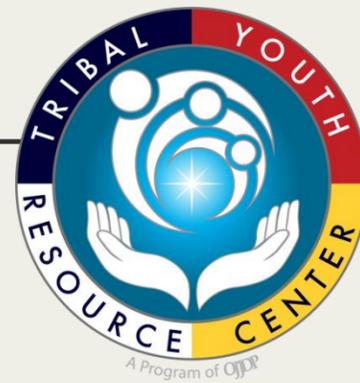
Drug Court Practitioner Fact Sheet
The Marijuana Detection Window: Determining the Length of Time Cannabinoids Will Remain Detectable in Urine Following Smoking (2006)



Drug Court Practitioner Fact Sheet
Delta-8 THC and Drug Testing in Treatment Courts (2021)

Tribal Youth Resource Center





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