



Cannabis Legalization in

Maryland

A brief look from a public health perspective

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MD Alcohol, Tobacco & Cannabis Network

- Subgroup of the Maryland Public Health Association—state affiliate of APHA
- Informal network of researchers, prevention coordinators, neighborhood associations, advocacy orgs



- Use data and research as a guide
- Translate research into effective policy
- Connection between state and local decisionmakers
- Promote high quality leaders to advisory boards/councils
- Provide testimony and assistance to policymakers



MD Alcohol, Tobacco & Cannabis



- Focus on what is often missing from the legislative conversation:
- **Considerations for additional burden on administration and enforcement**



- Impact of increasing outlet density
- Risks to youth and special populations
- Implications for product innovations
- Input from local licensing boards/government and enforcement
- Health and safety voices



Alcohol, Tobacco & Cannabis Network



Definitions (yes, it's a bit confusing)

- **Cannabis sativa L.** (aka cannabis) is a species of plant.
- **Cannabis or “Marijuana”** is a term for the product, reputed for the psychoactive response it can produce in consumers due to its THC content. *Note that “marijuana” is not the most accepted*

term due to its racially-associated connotations. “Cannabis” is the preferred term.

hemp) is also a cannabis product. It has much lower THC and much higher CBD proportions

than the psychoactive cannabis. • **Cannabinoids** are natural compounds found in *Cannabis*

sativa L. They can trigger or enable all kinds of bodily responses (e.g., delta-9-THC,

delta-8-THC, THCV, HHC) • **Delta-9-THC** (aka delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol) is the leading

cannabinoid in cannabis and is what can make users feel high. THC is also present in hemp,

but in much lower amounts. • **CBD** (aka cannabidiol) is the most prevalent cannabinoid in

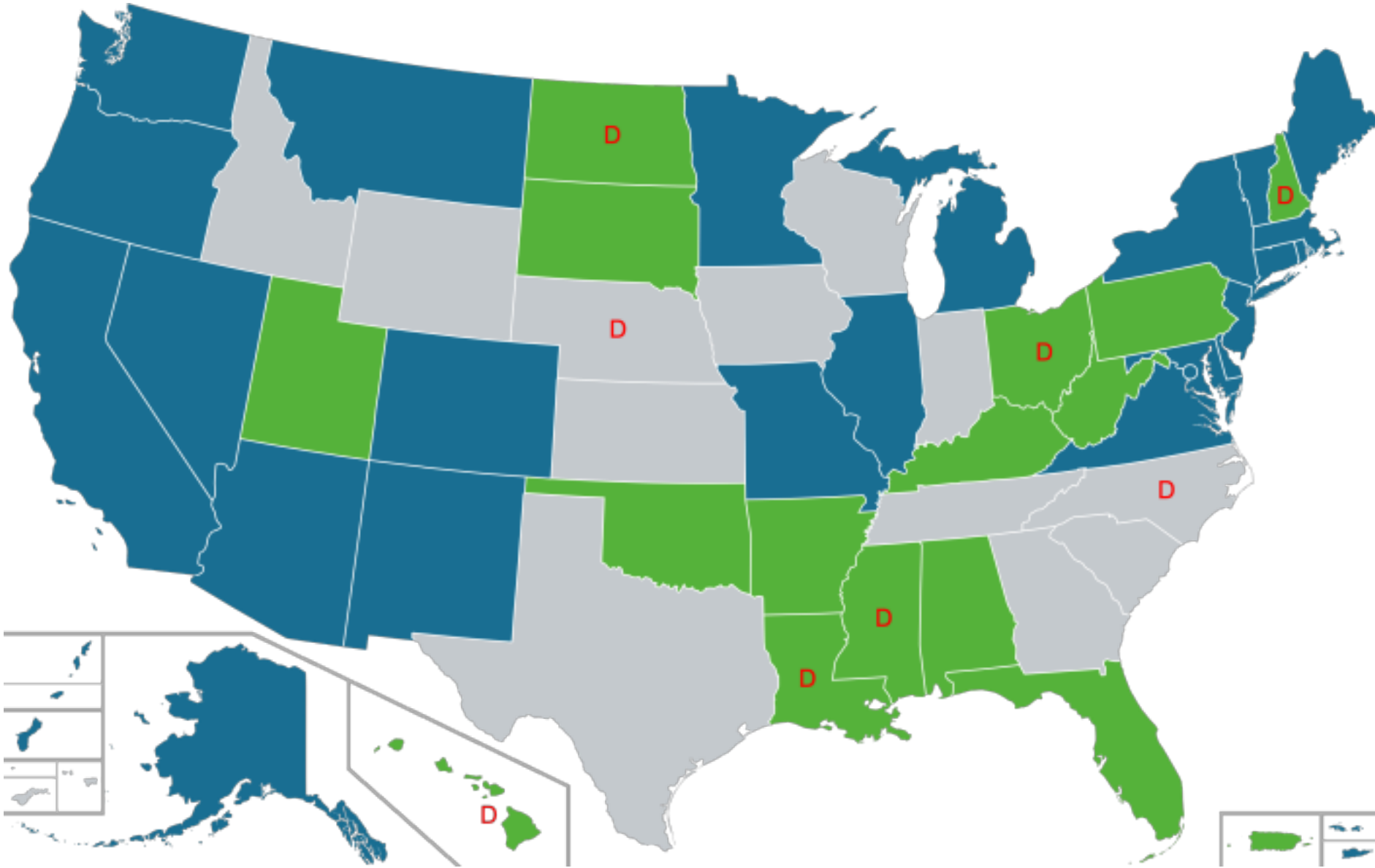
hemp, but is in other varieties of cannabis as well.

• **Derived Psychoactive Cannabis Products (DPCP)—synthetic** cannabinoids with psychoactive properties derived from CBD (e.g., THC-O, ~~PHC~~)



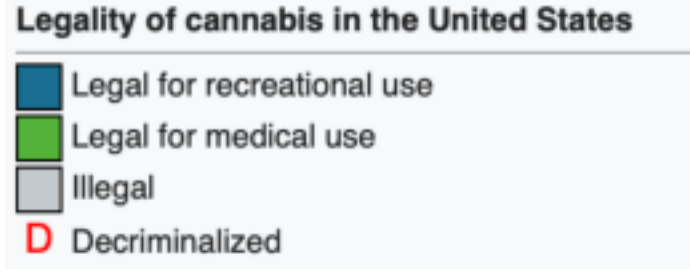
Use and Burden

Map of state cannabis laws



Medical use: 38 states, 4
territories, DC
Recreational: 23 states, 3

territories, DC



By Lokal_Profil, CC BY-SA 2.5

Cannabis: use

- Most commonly used federally illegal drug: 52.5 million people reported using in the past year
- Past month use increased from 8.3% to 12.9% from 2015 to 2021 in the US
 - Use has increased more in states that have legalized (>20%)
- Most reported first use between 13-18 years old in 2021

- Is cannabis replacing alcohol? Studies so far are mixed
- 81% of cannabis consumers believe it is safer than alcohol

*NSDUH; Zellers, 2022;
New Frontiers*

Cannabis: health effects

- Short term effects
 - Altered senses, sense of time
 - Changes in mood
 - Body movement impairment
 - Impaired memory
 - Increased heart rate
 - Hallucinations, delusions (in high doses)
 - Psychosis (high potency products used regularly)

- Long term effects
 - Brain development
 - Problems with child development before/after pregnancy

<https://nida.nih.gov/publications/drugfacts/cannabis-marijuana>

Cannabis: health effects

- Addiction
 - Cannabis use disorder is more common in those who initiate as teens or who use more heavily
 - 3 in 10 people who use cannabis may have cannabis use disorder
 - Up to 50% of people who regularly use cannabis have experienced cannabis withdrawal syndrome (Bahji, 2020)
- Cancer
 - Certain cannabinoids have been used to alleviate nausea/vomiting from chemo
 - May be a link between smoking cannabis and testicular cancer—more research needed
 - Driving
 - Increase in traffic crashes following legalization (Gonzalez-Sala, 2023)

- Heart health
- Studies linking cannabis use and heart attacks are based on reports of smoking cannabis—
more research is needed
- Lung health
- Greater risk of bronchitis, cough when smoked, even if it doesn't contain tobacco

<https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/health-effects/index.html>

Cannabis: health effects

- Mental health
 - Use has been linked to depression, anxiety, thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts, increased risk of schizophrenia
 - Temporary psychosis
- Pain
 - Unclear of effect of cannabis on pain
 - May be emerging evidence of a reduction in opioid prescriptions in states that have legalized medical cannabis
- Poisoning
 - Edibles take longer to take effect

- May ingest too much, effects may not be expected, may last a long time
- Children and pets can experience toxicity due to products not being secured, looking like candy
- Risk of using other drugs
- Second-hand smoke and harms to others

<https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/health-effects/index.html>

Simultaneous cannabis and alcohol use (SAM)

- Use of both cannabis and alcohol at the same time so effects overlap
- SAM has increased in states that have legalized recreational cannabis
- Associated with more alcohol use



(drinks consumed) and negative consequences from alcohol use (e.g., DUI, alcohol use disorder)

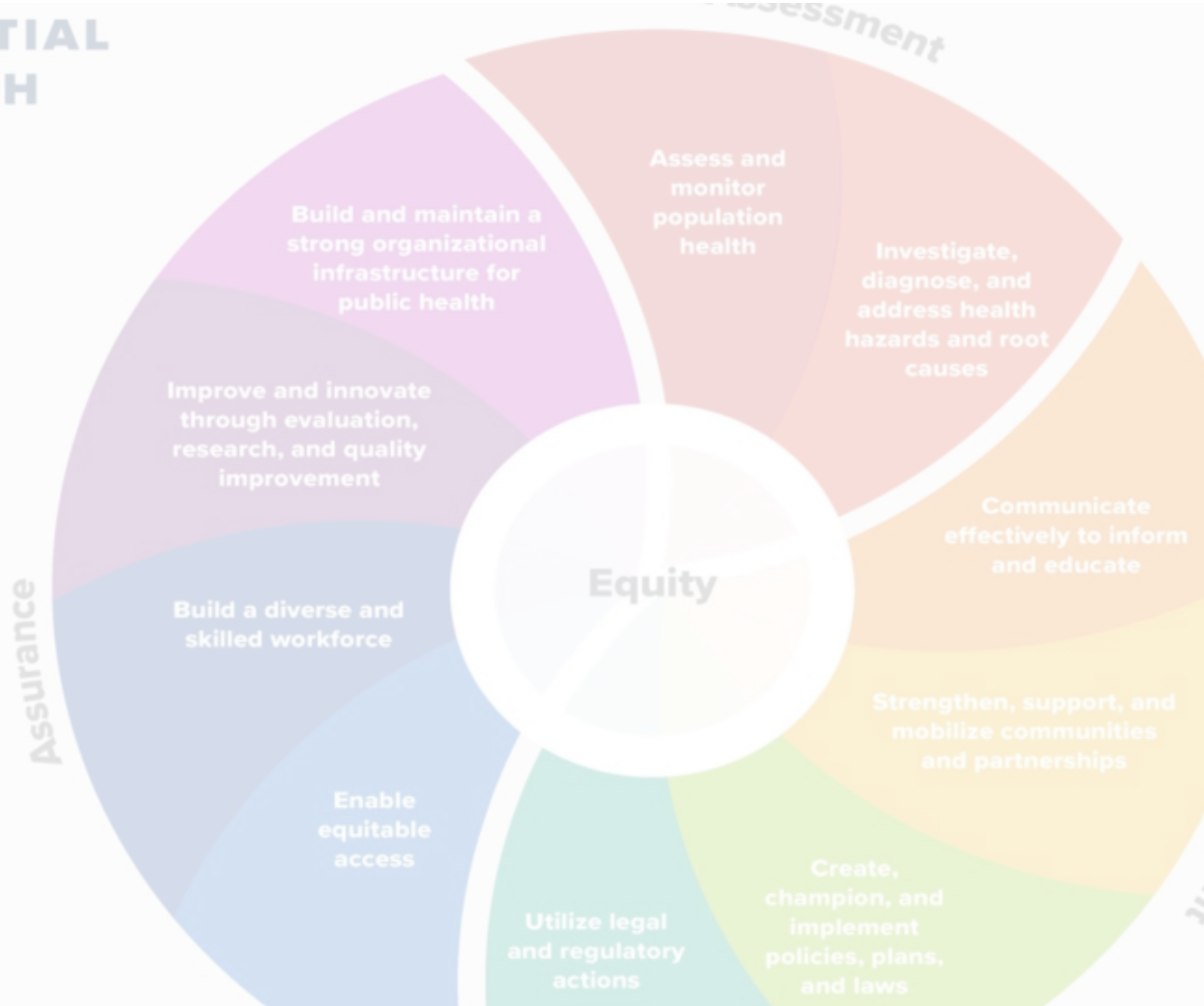
- Also associated with more hours reported high

Fairlie, ACER, 2023; Goncalves, J Gen Int Med, 2022

THE 10 ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

To protect and promote the health of all people in all communities

The 10 Essential Public Health Services provide a framework for public health to protect and promote the health of all people in all communities. To achieve optimal health for all, the Essential Public Health Services actively promote policies, systems, and services that enable good health and seek to remove obstacles and systemic and structural barriers, such as poverty, racism, gender discrimination, and other forms of oppression, that have resulted in health inequities. Everyone should



Our Framework and Strategies

“Traditional”
cannabis

Cannabis

products

today

Cannabis
Flower

Factors that Affect Health ^{Examples}

Smallest Impact

Rx for high blood pressure, diabetes

Immunizations, brief intervention, cessation treatment

Fluoridation, 0g trans fat, smoke-free laws, tobacco tax

Poverty, education, housing, inequality

Frieden, 2010

Largest Impact

Eat healthy, be physically active

Factors that Affect Health

Little political will needed

Examples

Education and counseling, SBIRT

Evidence-based treatment and other medical

interventions

Population-level access to treatment and SBIRT, strong media campaigns

Much political will needed

(i.e. high audience penetration)

Remove dangerous products (high potency), taxes, reduce cannabis outlets, restrict/reduce marketing

Poverty, education, housing, inequality

Labeling-related policy options

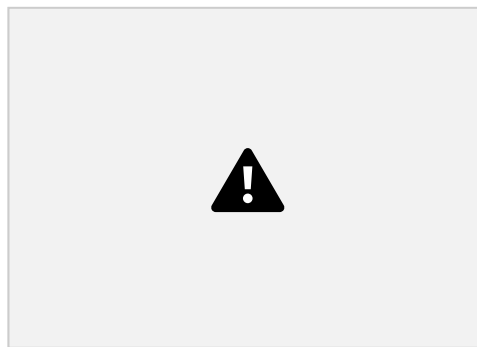
- Labeling is a critical public health tool
 - Reduce risk of accidental ingestion
 - Make informed decisions
 - Reduce appeal to youth



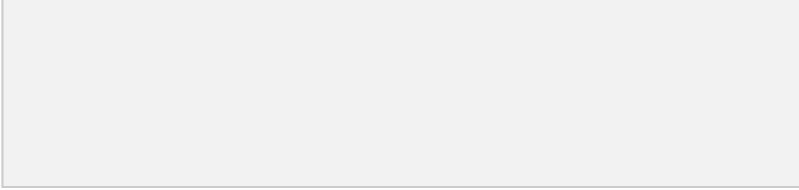
1. General requirements: font, text size
2. Health warnings: location of warning, operating machinery, delayed onset (edibles), pregnant/breastfeeding, keep away from children/animals, Not Safe For Kids icon
3. Universal symbol requirements: symbol indicating the product contains THC, size and location of symbol

<https://www.networkforphl.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Cannabis-Product-Labeling-Regulation.pdf>

“Universal” symbols

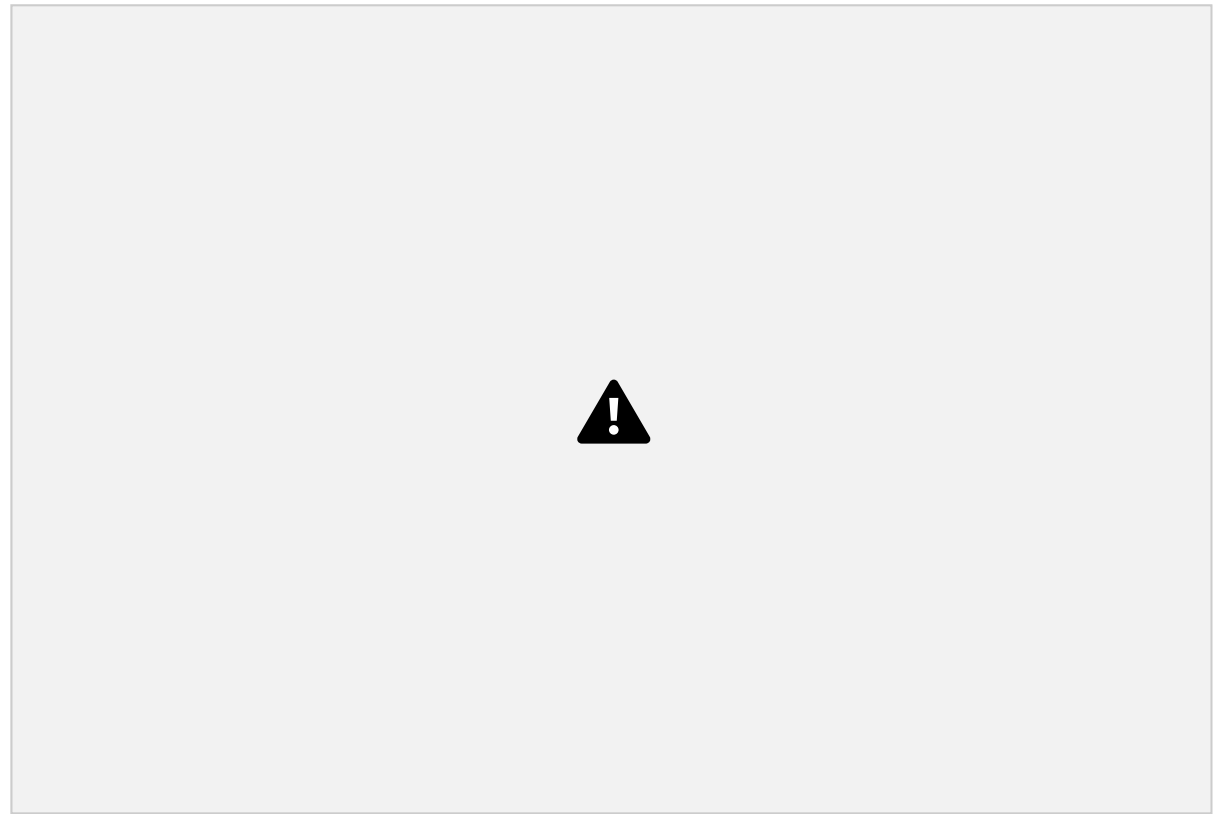


Oregon



Michigan

Massachusetts



New Jersey

Industry-promoted

Packaging-related policy options

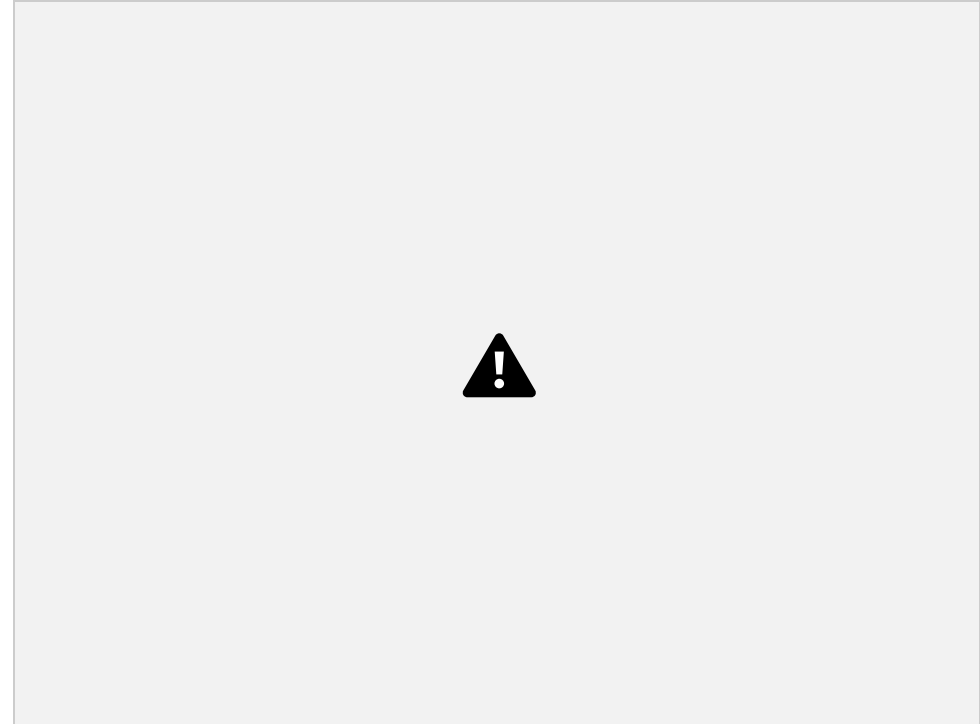
- Packaging is another critical public health tool
 - Reduce risk of accidental ingestion
 - Reduce appeal to youth
- 1. Plain packaging
- 2. Opaque packaging
- 3. Child-resistant packaging
- 4. Tamper-evident packaging
- 5. General prohibition on appeal to children
- 6. Prohibit packaging that resembles commercially-available food
- 7. Poison control number

<https://www.networkforphl.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Packaging-Regulation.pdf>

Consumption site-related policy options

- Locations where consumers can legally use cannabis • Increase access, use
 - May lead to driving while intoxicated
 - Location for individuals with no other legal options

1. Allow or not in general
2. Allow use at retailers
3. Special license
4. Consumption only
5. Prohibition of alcohol, tobacco, food
6. Definition of outdoor/premises
7. Zoning: buffer zones for sensitive locations
8. Visibility to public



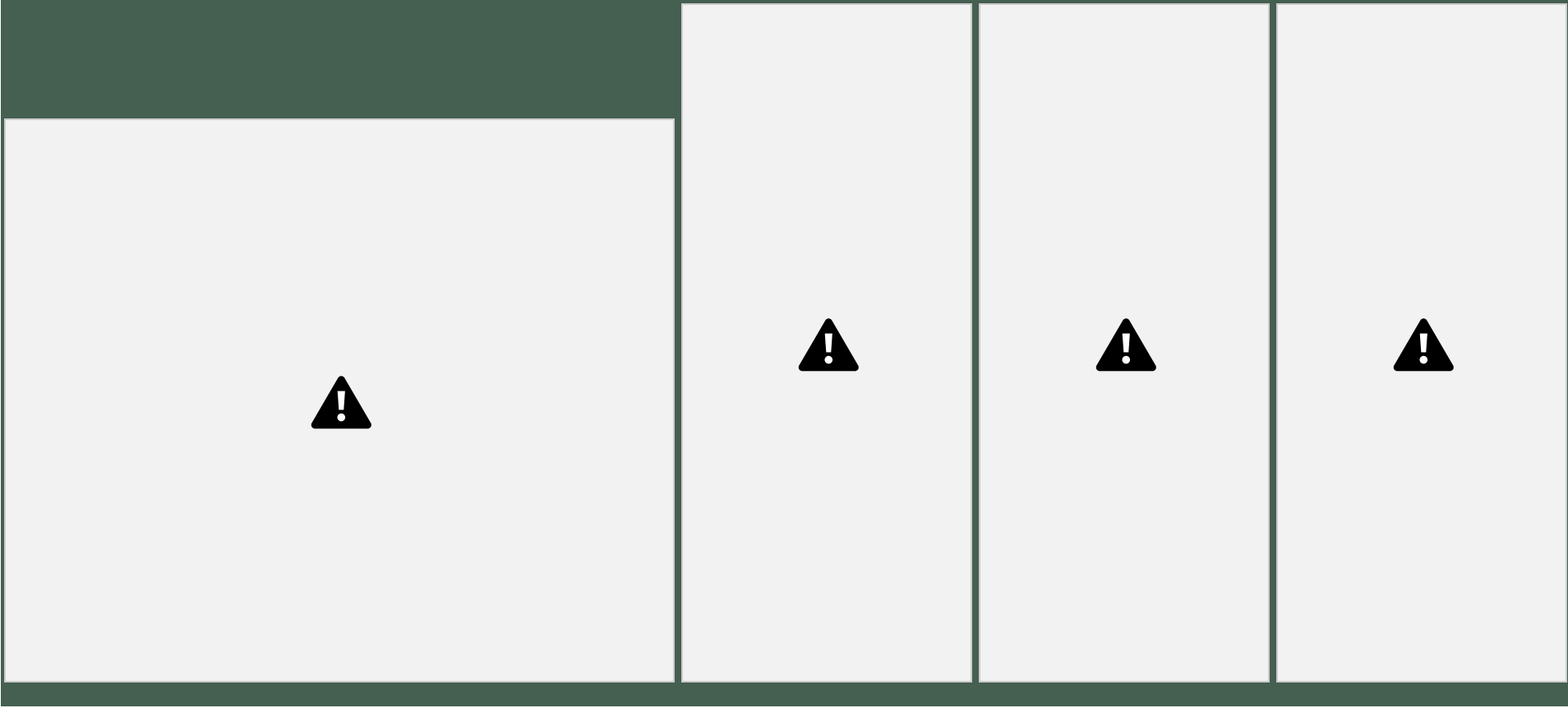
The Vegas Tasting Room, NV



Crossover with alcohol

Let's put alcohol in everything...

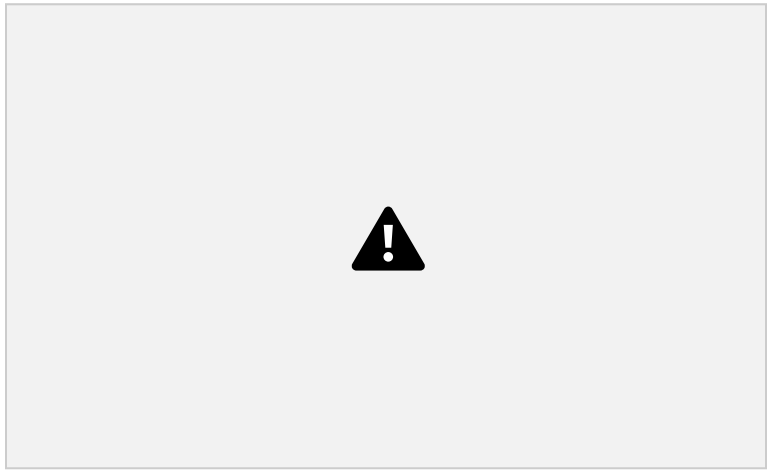






Let's put alcohol in
everything...

Cannabis



Big alcohol poised to flood the market

“In a matter of three years, Tilray has solidified its leadership position in the craft beer industry, and we fully intend to be that change agent that reinvigorates the sector. Upon federal cannabis legalization, we expect to leverage our leadership position, wide distribution network and portfolio of beloved beverage and wellness brands to include THC-based products all commercial opportunities.”



--Irwin Simon, President, Tilray Brands

Big alcohol on board with products

New liquid cannabis products



"...fuses nature with science and exists to enhance human potential..."



...e into any beverage

cts
icts



*Taking advantage of
“wellness minded”
consumers*

Alcohol replacement products





Challenges and Opportunity

Lookalikes





Lookalikes





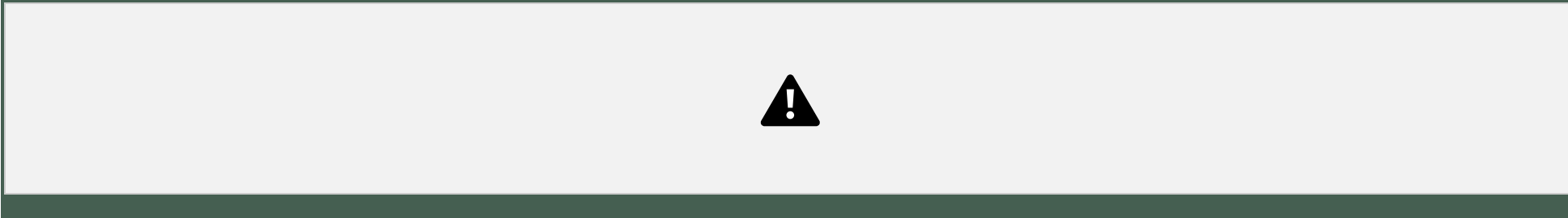
Challenges for law enforcement





Pumping the brakes





YOUR questions

- There aren't clear signs of impairment that differ between alcohol and cannabis
- Sales to intoxicated
 - You CAN refuse to serve someone who appears impaired, regardless of what they might be "on"
 - Maryland does not have dram shop liability yet, so consider your procedures regarding alcohol

- Cannabis and alcohol cannot be sold in the same place in Maryland
- You need to have a license to sell any cannabis products
- CBD in food and health products is still federally illegal (and Maryland reiterated that)
- Cannabis may not be smoked in any public areas
- Landlords and management companies (private entities) may prohibit its use

On site consumption: MD license parameters

- Establishment to allow the sale and use of cannabis products
- **Must be approved by local jurisdiction**
- Must be 21+ to enter
- May not serve to intoxicated patrons
- May not smoke cannabis indoors
- Employees may not use while working

- May not distribute free samples
- **May not serve or consume alcohol**
- May not smoke or vape tobacco indoors
- Cannabis products may not be visible from the outside • Must provide educational materials regarding safe consumption



Questions?

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