

***I Am One and  
I Make One Choice for Health***  
A Data-Informed, Youth-Driven, Prevention Message

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Vice President  
Institute for Behavior and Health, Inc.

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### What You Will Take Away from Today



- Understand the unique impact alcohol, marijuana, nicotine, and other substances have on the adolescent brain



- Explain how all youth drug use is connected (AKA why "it's just a little weed" is not based in reality)



- Know the facts: it's possible for young people to make the choice to be drug-free...the number of teens choosing to be drug-free is **GROWING EVERY DAY**

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### Setting the Stage

- Today most drug prevention is focused on individual drugs, specific settings and even specific amounts
- We need to think bigger
- **There are no good or "safe" drugs for adolescents**

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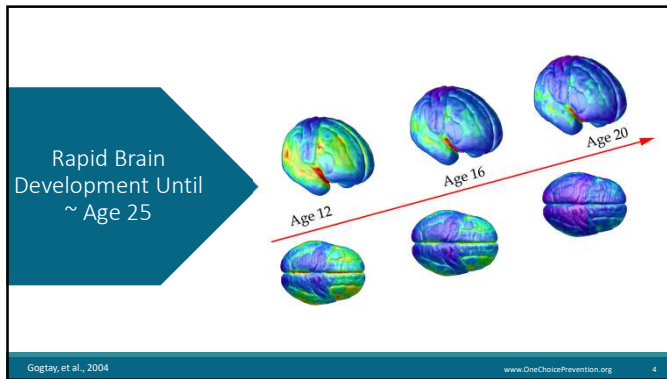
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### How Does Addiction Happen? *Brain Biology, Genetics and the Environment*

-  Drugs are chemicals that super-stimulate the brain's complex reward system
-  Hardwired into the brain to promote behaviors necessary to the survival of the species – prototypes are food and sex
-  Animal studies show priority for drug use – they work harder for drugs than for other rewards

NIDA, 2018; DuPont, Madras & Johansson, 2011 www.OneChoicePrevention.org

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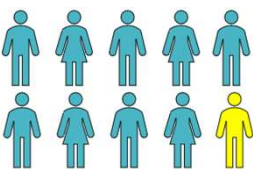
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### Substance Use Disorders are Pediatric-Onset Diseases

- 9 out of 10 adults – 90% – with substance use disorders began smoking, drinking or using other drugs **before age 18**
- The earlier and heavier the use, the more likely a person will develop later problems



National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, 2011 www.OneChoicePrevention.org

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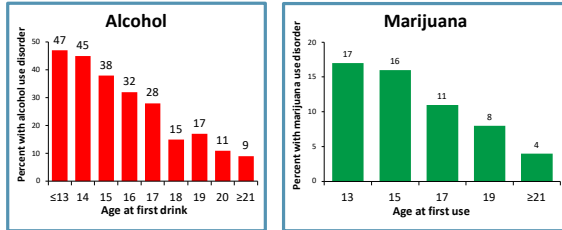
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## Age at First Use and Later Risk for Addiction



Courtesy of Sharon Levy, MD. Sources: Hingson, et al., 2006; McCabe SE et al., 2007

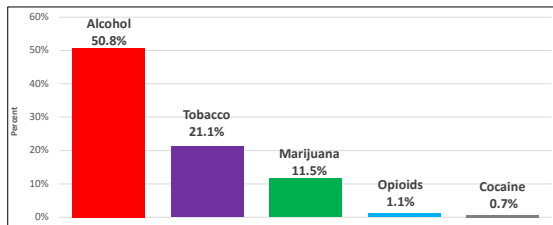
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## Past Month Substance Use

By Americans Age 12+ in 2019 – National Survey on Drug Use and Health



Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, 2020

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## All Substance Use Puts Adolescents at Risk

- Early initiation and continued substance use significantly increases risks of problems related to:
  - Physical health
  - Mental health
  - Serious injury or death from accidents
  - Becoming a victim of violence or sexual assault
  - Lower academic achievement
  - High school and college dropout

National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, 2011; DuPont, et al., 2013

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## We Know the Importance of Youth Drug Prevention – but is *there a Clear Goal?*

- Many efforts are focused on individual drugs, specific settings and even specific amounts
- Questions for prevention messaging:
  - What is considered a “drug”?
  - What does “drug-free” mean?
  - What are we preventing: use? misuse? overdose?
  - Who and what age are “youth”?

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## A New Vision

- No use of any alcohol, nicotine, marijuana or other drugs for reasons of health for youth under 21
- Refocus prevention messages and programs on One Choice as a new health standard

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## Universal Support for Other Clear Messages that Support Teen Health



- Always use a seat belt
- Always wear a bicycle helmet
- Avoid sugary drinks and eat a healthy diet
- Exercise regularly

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### The One Choice Message Makes Avoiding Substance Use a Clear Health Message

- “**Experimentation**” with drugs and alcohol is often generalized as inevitable and even desirable
- All teen drug use is illegal for good health reasons
- All commercial industries – alcohol, nicotine and, now legal, marijuana – officially discourage underage use

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### Why Not Be Substance-Specific in Youth Prevention Efforts?

***For Teens, All Substance Use is Related***

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### National Data Tells the Story

- Data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health
- Nationally representative sample of 17,000 youth aged 12-17
- Conducted descriptive analyses and applied multivariable logistic regression models controlling for age, sex, and race/ethnicity
- **Is the use of one substance by adolescents associated with increased risk for using any other substance, regardless of use sequences?**

DuPont, et al., 2018

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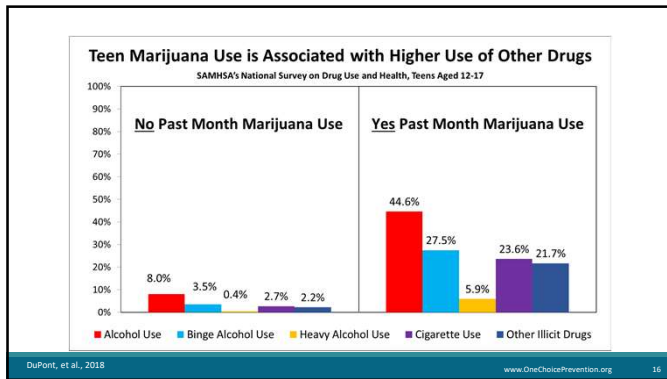
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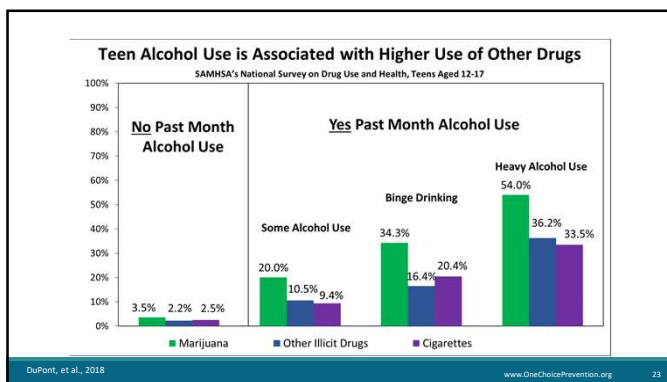
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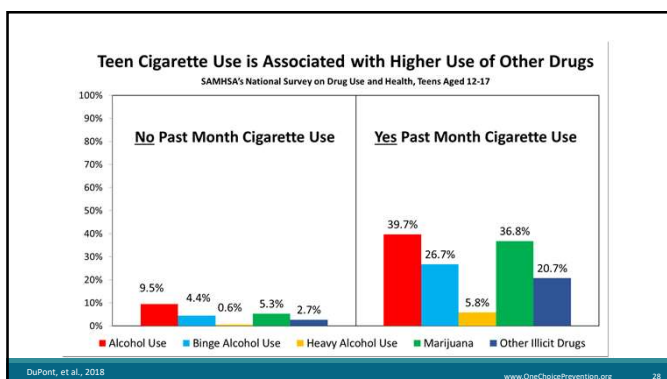
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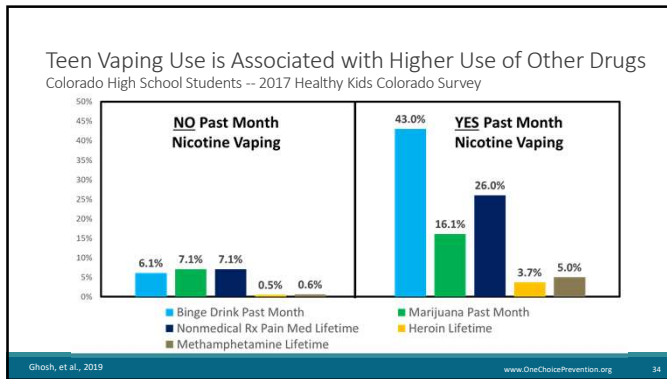
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The crucial decision for youth is whether to use or not use drugs

This underscores the need for a clear goal for youth prevention

DuPont, et al., 2018 [www.OneChoicePrevention.org](http://www.OneChoicePrevention.org) 35

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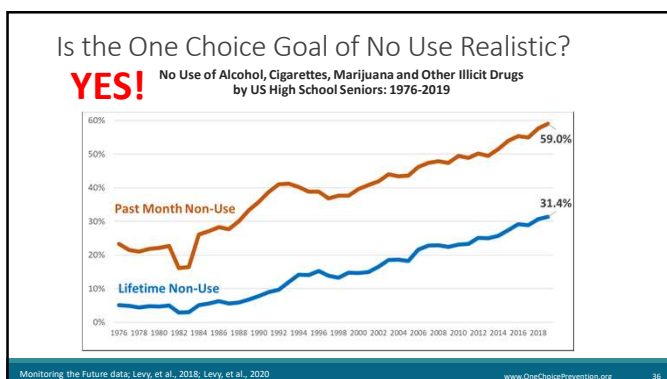
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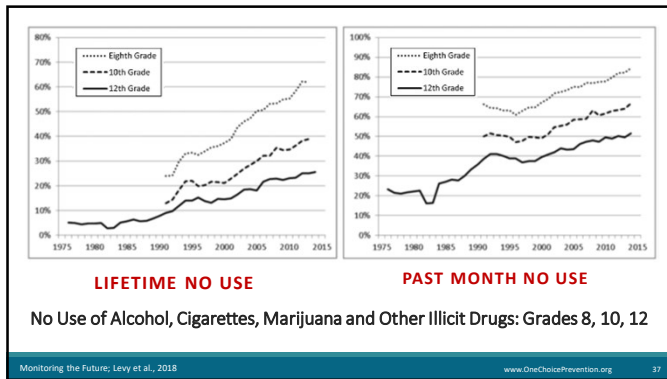
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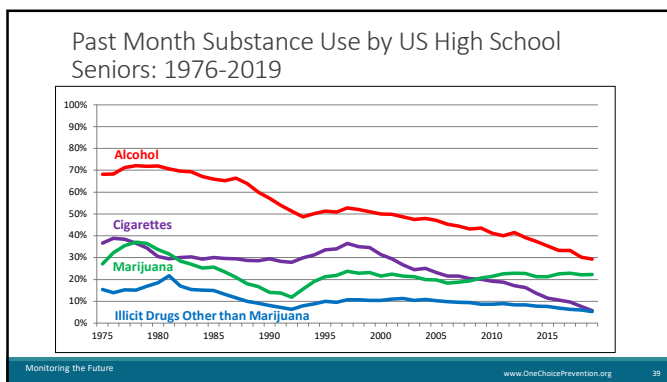
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### The Context of the Larger Issue of Commercialized Recreational Pharmacology

- Super-stimulation of brain reward, promoted by a for-profit industry and driven by the exploitation of people who use both illegal and legal drugs
- Recent example of vaping targeting youth: now officially illegal for anyone under 21 along with alcohol, marijuana and other drugs
- New delivery systems will be created, new potencies and new drugs – emphasizes the need to embrace unified health standard of no use for youth

DuPont & Levy, 2020; DuPont, 2019

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### Learn From History of Nicotine Use in the US

- Delivery system of the cigarette changed the way people consumed nicotine beginning in the 1880s
- Emergence of vaping

Wang, et al., 2020

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- E-cigarette aerosol can contain harmful ingredients
- Young people who use e-cigarettes are more likely to go on to use regular cigarettes

CDC, 2019

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### Big Marijuana is Using the Big Tobacco Playbook

Cigarette Ads from Stanford School of Medicine

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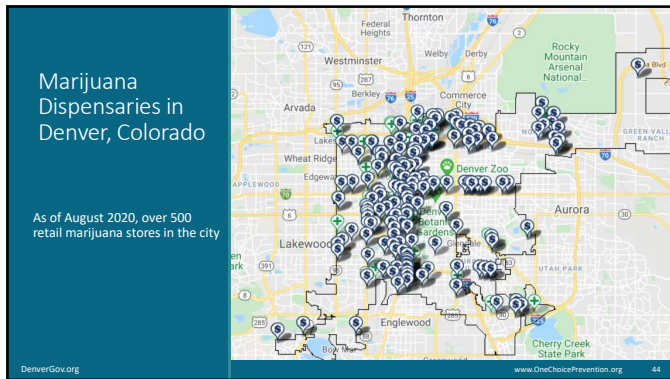
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DENVER DISPENSARY COUNT 2018		COLORADO DISPENSARY COUNT 2018	
STORE	COUNT	STORE	COUNT
 REC DISPENSARIES	169	 REC DISPENSARIES	518
 MED DISPENSARIES	195	 MED DISPENSARIES	503
TOTAL	364	TOTAL	1,021
 STARBUCKS	80	 STARBUCKS	322
 MCDONALDS	31	 WALMARTS	106
TOTAL	111	TOTAL	428

My 420 Tours, 2018

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# One Choice

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*No use of any alcohol, nicotine, marijuana or other drugs for reasons of health for youth under 21*

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## One Choice is **Not** *Just Say No*

- Youth substance use is a **health issue**, not a moral issue
- One Choice offers a clear standard of no-use for health supported by the science of the developing brain
- Supports all other prevention efforts
- Promotes teen self-care and autonomy
- Provides an opportunity to develop teen leadership

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## Who Can Make One Choice?

- Anyone and everyone
- Teens who have never used any substance
- Teens who may have used in the past but are making One Choice today
- Individuals with substance use problems actively making One Choice including those in early and long-term recovery
- One Choice message is supported by science and data and supports all other prevention messages

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## The Essential Role of Parents and Caring Adult Community Members in Supporting One Choice

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### Adults:

- Often doubtful that the goal of no-use is possible
- Second guess how to articulate the message to their children
- May perpetuate concept of “cool kids” as those who are using alcohol and drugs and fear teen will be excluded from social activities

### Teens:

- Many have life experience in making One Choice and are excited to be recognized
- Some may not join One Choice movement outwardly but self-identify with the message
- Generation wants to make an impact on the world they inherit – they see the impact of drugs

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### What Can Caring Adults Do?

- Talk early and often about your expectations of no use
- Fit the One Choice into your family's – and your community's – vision for health and wellness
- As adults, check our own substance use in terms of modeling appropriate behaviors and consider family risk factors

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### Youth are Leading the One Choice Movement



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Remember --

-  • The unique impact that marijuana, alcohol, nicotine, and other substances have on the adolescent brain
-  • All youth drug use is connected
-  • We can support youth to make One Choice for health

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# THANK YOU!

[Join the One Choice Community](#)

Stay in Touch: [OneChoice@IBHinc.org](mailto:OneChoice@IBHinc.org)



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