



# Mott Poll Report

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## Keeping Medical Marijuana Dispensaries Away from Children

Medical marijuana dispensaries are places where marijuana is sold to individuals authorized to use it for medical purposes. Although medical marijuana is legal in many states, there is wide variation in the local or state policies that regulate the location and operation of medical marijuana dispensaries. The C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health asked a national sample of parents about their views on the location of medical marijuana dispensaries.

Most parents indicated they are in favor of legal medical marijuana, either for adults only (42%) or for any age (32%), while 26% of parents were opposed to medical marijuana. Nearly half of parents (45%) said that medical marijuana is legal in their state, and 24% knew there was at least one medical marijuana dispensary in their community. Only 20% of parents reported that their state or community has regulations about where dispensaries can be located; most (59%) did not know if such regulations exist in their state or community.

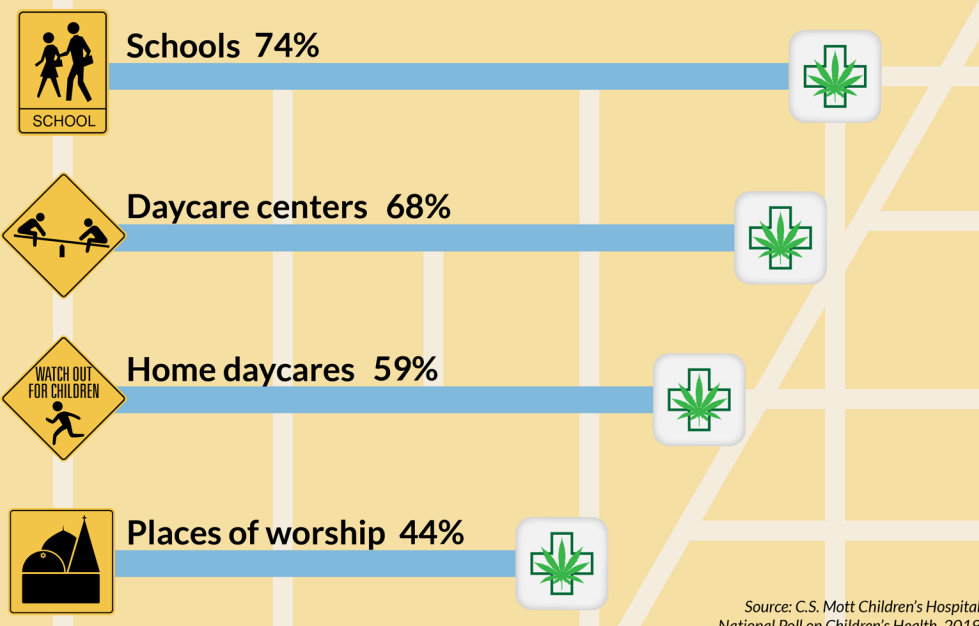
About three quarters of parents said medical marijuana dispensaries should be banned within a certain distance of schools; this level of support was the same for both elementary (74%) and middle/high schools (73%), and did not differ by parent gender, age, income or education. A majority of parents also felt dispensaries should be banned within a certain distance of daycare centers (68%) or home daycares (59%). In contrast, only 44% of parents thought dispensaries should not be allowed near places of worship.

Seven in ten parents (69%) agreed that parents should have a say in whether a dispensary is located near their child's school or daycare. Parents' greatest concerns about medical marijuana dispensaries located near schools or daycares were people driving while impaired (52% *very concerned*), children finding edible marijuana (48% *very concerned*), and teens having an easier chance of getting marijuana (49% *very concerned*). Other concerns were that dispensaries would set a bad example (45% *very concerned*) or bring violent crime to the area (35% *very concerned*).

Most parents (77%) agreed that medical marijuana dispensaries should have the same regulations as liquor stores for where they can be located. At the same time, 52% of parents agreed that dispensaries should have the same rights as other businesses. Nearly all parents (90%) felt dispensaries should undergo inspections to ensure they are following all regulations.

### Too close for comfort? Parents want medical marijuana dispensaries located away from children

% of parents who support banning dispensaries within certain distance



### Report Highlights

3 in 4 parents feel medical marijuana dispensaries should not be allowed near elementary, middle or high schools.

7 in 10 parents think they should have a say in whether a dispensary is located near their child's school or daycare.

About half of parents are very concerned about people driving while impaired if a dispensary were located near their child's school or daycare.

## Data Source & Methods

This report presents findings from a nationally representative household survey conducted exclusively by GfK Custom Research, LLC (GfK), for C.S. Mott Children's Hospital. The survey was administered in October 2018 to a randomly selected, stratified group of parents age 18 and older (n=2,007). Adults were selected from GfK's web-enabled KnowledgePanel® that closely resembles the U.S. population. The sample was subsequently weighted to reflect population figures from the Census Bureau. The survey completion rate was 60% among panel members contacted to participate. This report is based on responses from 2,007 parents who had at least one child 0-18 years. The margin of error is ±2 percentage points.

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Findings from the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health do not represent the opinions of the University of Michigan. The University of Michigan reserves all rights over this material.

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## Implications

This Mott Poll addresses a topic that has received little attention: whether parents believe the location of medical marijuana dispensaries poses a risk to children. Although medical marijuana is legal in about two-thirds of US states, there is not a consistent framework at either the state or local level to regulate the location and operations of dispensaries. Moreover, some states may have additional legal complexities differentiating the sale of medical vs recreational marijuana. The lack of established standards may lead officials to enact policies that either fail to address parents' key concerns or impose more stringent regulations that parents would prefer.

Overall, parents are not against medical marijuana. Three quarters of parents in this Mott Poll indicated their support for legal medical marijuana; this includes one third of parents who support the option for children to use medical marijuana. Parents likely are aware that marijuana can be helpful for relieving pain or nausea, or in situations where other treatments have failed. Most parents agree that these patients should be able to acquire and use marijuana for medical reasons.

At the same time, parents believe that there should be limitations around the location of medical marijuana dispensaries. This includes strong support for banning dispensaries within a certain distance of elementary schools, middle/high schools, and daycare centers. Support for such bans was equally strong among both mothers and fathers, younger and older parents, and parents of higher and lower income.

These Mott Poll results provide a glimpse into parents' reasons for wanting a protective buffer around their children's schools and daycare centers. A significant concern for parents is whether customers of dispensaries might be impaired from marijuana, which could pose a risk to children on their way to or from school. Parents also have concerns that children might find edible marijuana that was left behind inadvertently by a dispensary customer. With regard to teens, parents worry that the presence of a dispensary near school would create an easier opportunity for them to obtain marijuana.

Another area of parent concern involves the potential for dispensaries to bring violent crime to the area. Because the federal government still classifies marijuana as an illegal drug, even in states that have legalized it for medical use, banks that handle marijuana money can be charged with money laundering. As a result, medical marijuana transactions are typically made in cash. For dispensaries located near schools or daycares, parents may worry that their children could be in danger from potential robbers.

Two thirds of parents feel they should have input into any decision about locating a dispensary near their child's school or daycare. This may prove difficult for parents, as the applicable action could occur through a state law, local zoning regulation, or other governmental action. This creates a situation in which parents who want to share their views about dispensaries may not know whether to contact elected officials or commissions, or whether to focus at the state or local level. Furthermore, parents may not be aware that a specific dispensary location is under consideration until a decision is announced. Thus, the opportunity for parental input may be limited.

Despite their overall support for limiting the location of medical marijuana dispensaries, 6 in 10 parents in this Mott Poll did not know if their state or community had any regulation in this area. With such little knowledge of current regulations, parents may have difficulty advocating for a specific law or policy solution for dispensaries. However, a familiar analogy for many parents is liquor stores, which also are governed by state laws and local ordinances; these Mott Poll results suggest that parents may support a similar approach for dispensaries.

The most widespread parent belief shown in these results is for inspections of medical marijuana dispensaries to ensure they are complying with all regulations. Parents may want to include regular and rigorous inspections in their efforts to advocate for strategies to limit the risk to children from dispensaries.