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## Report Highlights

**10% of U.S. adults either have a medical marijuana card or know someone who does.**

**36% of adults agree that their state should allow medical marijuana for children under 18.**

**80% of respondents agree that adults should not be allowed to use medical marijuana in the presence of children.**

## Contact us

*A publication from C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, the University of Michigan Department of Pediatrics and Communicable Diseases, and the University of Michigan Child Health Evaluation and Research (CHEAR) Unit.*

## Support for Medical Marijuana Use Lower for Kids than for Adults

Currently, about half of states and the District of Columbia permit the use of marijuana for medical purposes. Advocates for medical marijuana argue that it can be safe and effective for treating symptoms related to diseases such as cancer, glaucoma, HIV/AIDS, and epilepsy for adults and children. Those opposed to medical marijuana are concerned about inadequate scientific testing of medical marijuana as a treatment, negative side effects of marijuana on the brain and other organs, and evidence that drug use early in life is more likely to lead to drug addiction in adulthood.

Previous reports about public views on medical marijuana have not focused on perceptions of medical marijuana for children. In November/December 2014, the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health asked a national sample of adults about their opinions regarding medical marijuana use for adults and children.

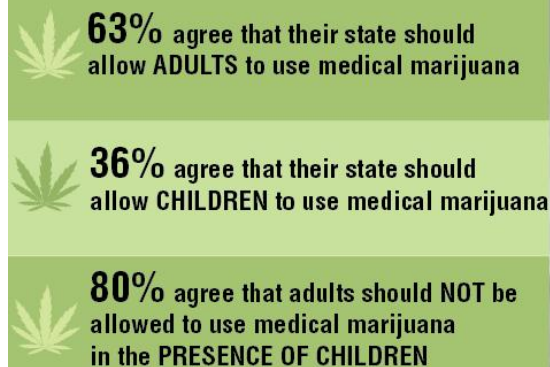
### Use and Support of Medical Marijuana

One in ten respondents know someone who has a medical marijuana card or have one themselves. Slightly fewer (7%) know someone who uses medical marijuana when children are present or do so themselves.

Nearly two-thirds (63%) of respondents agree (strongly agree/somewhat agree) their state should allow medical marijuana for adults. In contrast, about one-third (36%) agree medical marijuana should be allowed for children.

Four out of five respondents agree that adults should not be able to use medical marijuana in the presence of children (Figure 1).

### Figure 1. Opinions about medical marijuana use by adults and children



*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 via a method used in many published studies. The survey was administered in November / December 2014 to a randomly selected, stratified group of adults age 18 and older from GfK's web-enabled KnowledgePanel® that closely resembles the U.S. population. Responses from adults (n=2,176) were used for this report. The sample was subsequently weighted to reflect population figures from the Census Bureau. The survey completion rate was 54% among parent panel members contacted to participate. The margin of error is ± 2 to 3 percentage points.*

## **Implications**

This Poll is the first to measure the public's views about the use of medical marijuana for children, compared with medical marijuana for adults. Although this distinction is unusual in states' medical marijuana laws to date, our results indicate that the public sees the use of medical marijuana differently for adults compared with children, in two main ways.

First, public support for state laws permitting medical marijuana is only about half as strong for children as it is for adults. The reasons for this difference may relate to prior research indicating that the brains and nervous systems of children and adolescents are especially vulnerable to adverse effects of marijuana use. This concern has been raised by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

Second, there is strong public consensus that adults should not be allowed to use medical marijuana in the presence of children. This finding suggests that the majority of US adults are concerned that exposure of children to marijuana use by adults, even in the context of medical use, may adversely affect children's health. Parents of children and adolescents were particularly likely to agree that medical marijuana use should be curbed in front of children.

The national debate about medical marijuana has played out at the state level. While the federal government has continued to regard marijuana as an illegal substance, almost half of all states have enacted laws that permit patients to possess specific quantities of marijuana for medical purposes.

In March 2015, members of Congress introduced new bills calling for the federal government to respect states' actions regarding medical marijuana and to reclassify marijuana as a controlled substance that can be dispensed legally. The reclassification would permit broader federal funding of medical research about marijuana.

These findings offer new perspectives from the public that can inform future state and federal lawmaking about medical marijuana. Although most existing laws make few distinctions between adults and children for medical marijuana use, the public views medical marijuana for children differently.

Of note, this Poll focused exclusively on public views of state laws about medical marijuana. Broader permission for recreational use of marijuana was not asked.

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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 investigators or the opinions of the University of Michigan. The University of Michigan reserves all rights over this material.*