



# DRIVING AFTER MARIJUANA USE, 2014-2016

## YOUNG ADULT HEALTH SURVEY

PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL & HEALTH SERVICES' DIVISION OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH & RECOVERY (DBHR) AND THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON'S CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF HEALTH AND RISK BEHAVIORS (CSHRB)



### WHAT DID WE ASK?

Two survey questions had relevance to this fact sheet. We asked participants if they had used marijuana in the past 12 months. If they had, we asked if they had driven within 3 hours of use in the past 30 days.

### WHAT DID WE DO?

Thousands of 18-25 year olds in Washington participated in web-based surveys during 2014, 2015, and 2016. Participants were recruited statewide through direct mail invitation and various social media sites. Each year included a new sample/cohort as well as follow-ups with previous cohorts. While it is not a random sample (and is instead a sample of convenience), data were weighted to match Washington Census data and improve generalizability.

### WHO COMPLETED THE SURVEY?

We had 3 groups of people:  
2014: 2,101 participants  
2015: 1,675 participants  
2016: 2,493 participants

### WHY DID WE ASK THAT?

The 3-hour window matters a lot! Washington State's Driving Under the Influence (DUI) definition is 5 nanograms of THC per milliliter of blood for those over 21 years of age, and any positive amount for those under 21 years of age. This is a "per se" limit, meaning any amount over these cutoffs is a violation. One published study (Grotenhermen, et al., 2007) shows that it takes 3 hours to drop below 4.9 nanograms, meaning any driving within 3 hours of use would be driving under the influence.

Grotenhermen, G., Leson, G., Berghaus, G., Drummer, O.H., Krüger, H-P, Longo, M., Moskowitz, H., Perrine, B., Ramaekers, J.G., Smiley, A., & Tunbridge, R. (2007). Developing limits for driving under cannabis. *Addiction*, 102, 1910-1917.

### WHAT DID WE FIND?

Since 2014, over 40% of those who reported past year marijuana use also reported driving within 3 hours of use. However, a smaller percentage drove within 3 hours of use in 2016, compared with 2014. See below for the percentages related to number of times people drove within 3 hours of use:

	0 times	1 time	2-3 times	4-5 times	6 or more times
2014	51%	14%	13%	6%	16%
2015	55%	13%	12%	4%	15%
2016	58%	13%	12%	3%	14%

### WHY DOES THAT MATTER?

While the percentage of people who use marijuana and report they've driven within 3 hours of use has gone down over time, an alarmingly high number of 18-25 year olds still report driving under the influence of marijuana. With potency of THC content going up, it likely could take even more than 3 hours before someone can safely drive after use. It's important to know about driving-related risks for those who make the choice to use marijuana (and for those who don't use, there's the chance to intervene with a potentially-impaired driver).

**FOR MORE DETAILS ON YOUNG ADULT HEALTH SURVEY (YAHS) METHODOLOGY AS WELL AS OTHER FACT SHEETS, SEE THE YAHS HOMEPAGE AT [HTTP://BLOGS.UW.EDU/UWWYAHS/](http://blogs.uw.edu/uwwyahs/)**