

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO RESPONSES  
TO  
2023-2024 GRAND JURY REPORTS

CANNABIS IN SAN DIEGO – HOW IS IT GOING?  
DOG BITES IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

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COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO RESPONSE TO 2023-24 GRAND JURY  
REPORT

“Cannabis in San Diego – How is it Going?”  
Published May 30, 2024

FINDINGS

**Findings F1 and F2 apply to the San Diego County Sheriff’s Department, therefore responses shall be submitted by the Sheriff’s Department directed to the Presiding Judge with an informational copy sent to the Board of Supervisors.**

**Finding F4:** The County does not report the non-financial costs (e.g., health and law enforcement impacts) of legalized cannabis, leaving citizens unaware of the full non-fiscal impacts of cannabis legalization.

**Response:** The County of San Diego disagrees partially with this finding. The County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) currently reports on many non-financial impacts of cannabis; this content is typically focused on public health impacts. For example, the County publishes data on cannabis related deaths, emergency department discharges, and hospitalizations. These data are publicly available through online dashboards published by the Community Health Statistics Unit within the HHSA Public Health Services and are intended to keep the public informed and aware of various health data in our county. Additionally, the San Diego County Cannabis Public Health Initiative, overseen by HHSA Behavioral Health Services, aims to increase public awareness on adverse effects resulting from cannabis misuse through media efforts and development of other educational resources.

The County Department of Planning & Development Services (PDS), through its Code Compliance Division, collaborates with the Sheriff’s Department and other County departments to address illicit cannabis operations. As part of regular performance metrics reporting, PDS reports on Code Compliance case data through the publicly available PDS website. In 2023 these efforts resulted in the closure of 23 cannabis cases.

**Finding F5:** Legalized cannabis has had significant health impacts on school-aged children and senior citizens.

**Response:** The County of San Diego disagrees partially with this finding. The County has reviewed data regarding this issue but a more comprehensive analysis assessing the

health impacts on school-aged children and senior citizens is needed to validate this claim. The County Health and Human Services Agency, Public Health Services has reviewed syndromic surveillance data for cannabis related emergency department visits and observed that since 2019, youth and young adults (15-24 age group) have had the highest number of cannabis related visits compared to all other age groups. However, overall, there is a downward trend in cannabis related emergency department visits. Additionally, local survey data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System conducted in San Diego Unified School District show a declining trend in both the percentage of youth who ever used marijuana as well as the percentage who tried marijuana for the first time before 13 years of age. For older adults, studies from local academic institutions have indicated they may experience health impacts related to cannabis misuse. However, this needs to be further assessed with local data and additional literature review.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation R1 applies to the San Diego County Sheriff's Department, therefore responses shall be submitted by the Sheriff's Department directed to the Presiding Judge with an informational copy sent to the Board of Supervisors.**

**The 2023-2024 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego County Board of Supervisors:**

**Recommendation R4:** Direct the county staff to develop reports that document the health and law enforcement impacts of cannabis legalization.

**Response: This recommendation requires further analysis.** The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency's (HHSA) Behavioral Health Services (BHS) department, in collaboration with other County departments, will identify current reports that document impacts of cannabis legalization, as well as establish additional opportunities for reporting on impacts. The County will conduct this environmental scan of resources in the next 90 days, at which time additional analyses (and potential report development) will be completed within 120 days thereafter. Analyses will be based on available data and will examine associations between cannabis legalization and impacts.

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