

Marijuana use and legalization

Since the federal government announced that marijuana sales would be legalized beginning July 1, 2018, there has been considerable discussion in the media and community about the potential uptake and impacts. PRA conducted a survey with 800 Manitobans (error rate of $\pm 3.5\%$, 19 times out of 20) to assess some of these impacts.

Summary of findings

According to our survey of Manitobans, the legalization of marijuana will see a relatively small increase in the percentage of adult users. About 15% of adult Manitobans have used marijuana in the past six months, with about 7% of Manitobans using at least monthly. As would be expected, the younger you are, the more likely it is that you have used marijuana. Among those 18 to 29 years of age, 29% report having used marijuana in the last six months, compared with just 3% of those 65 years of age or older.

Regardless of their age, almost all Manitobans (92%) are aware that marijuana will be legalized in 2018.

Once marijuana is legal, about 24% of adult Manitobans will at least consider buying marijuana from a store licensed to sell it. Among those who have not used marijuana in the last six months, only 15% indicated that they plan to buy it once it is legal, while most of those who have used marijuana in the last six months will transition to licensed stores (81%).

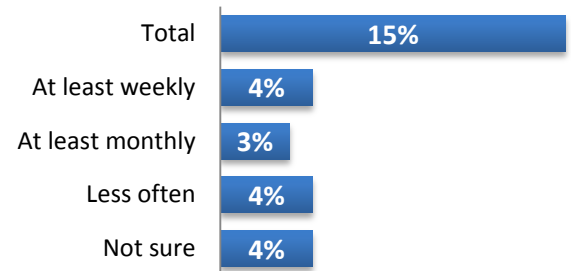
The biggest increase in consumption will be among the oldest Manitobans. About 15% of those 65 and older indicated that they would consider buying marijuana from a licensed store once it is legal. If all do so, this represents an increase of 463% (that is, from 3% who have used in the last six months, to 15% who may purchase it once it is legal). The smallest increase is among the youngest age group. About 34% of those 18 to 29 years of age will consider buying from a licensed store once marijuana is legal, up from 29% who have used in the last six months.

This suggests that the pent-up demand for marijuana is greatest among older adults. Young adults who want to use marijuana are generally already doing so, and the fact that marijuana is currently illegal does not appear to be much of a deterrent. However, among older Manitobans, the fact that marijuana is currently illegal or scarcely available is a significant barrier to use.

About 15% of Manitobans have used marijuana in the last 6 months.

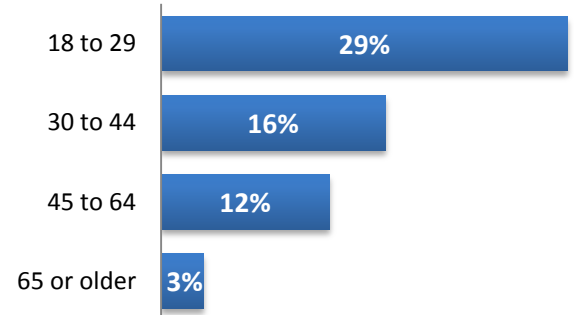
Overall, 15% of Manitobans report using marijuana, or were unsure of how often they had used it, in the past six months, which includes 4% of Manitobans who report using it at least weekly.

Used marijuana in the last 6 months



Not surprisingly, younger Manitobans are more likely to report using marijuana, with 29% of those under 30 reporting use in the past six months. This decreases by age, down to just 3% of those 65 and older.

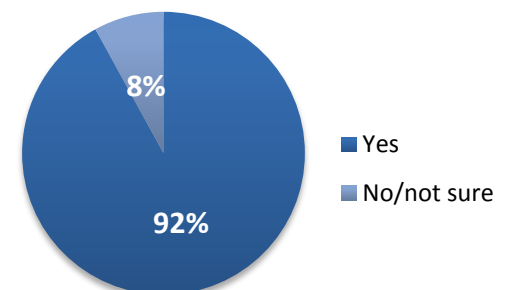
Use in the last 6 months by age



Almost all Manitobans are aware that marijuana will be legalized.

Unlike many legislative changes, almost all Manitobans (92%) say they are aware that the Government of Canada will be legalizing the sale of marijuana on July 1, 2018. Awareness is very high regardless of age, gender, or income, suggesting it is a high profile issue that speaks to all Manitobans.

Aware marijuana will be legalized

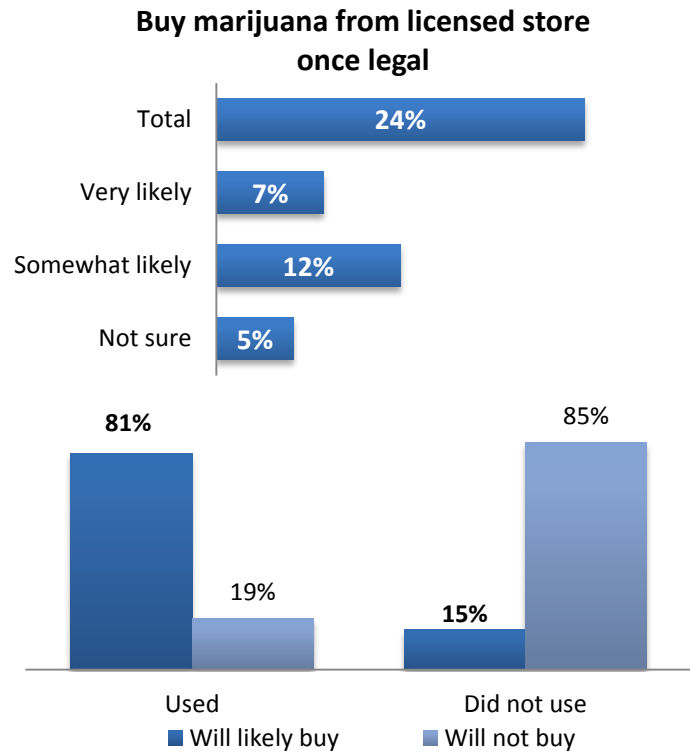


Once marijuana is legal, about 1 in 4 will consider buying from a licensed store.

Once it is legal, 24% of adult Manitobans will at least consider buying marijuana from a store licensed to sell it. This assumes that the 5% who said they are not sure will at least consider it, and that factors such as price, convenience, and so on may affect their decision to purchase or not.

Among those who did not report using marijuana in the last six months, 15% will consider buying it once it is available in a licensed store. Among those who have used it in the last six months, 81% will consider purchasing it from stores. Of interest, 19% who have used in the past six months say that they will not buy from a store once it is legal. While we did not directly ask why, this could be for many reasons: they may be planning to grow their own (as it will be legal to do so as of July 1, 2018), they may continue to receive it through a medical marijuana program, they may not be planning on using in the future, or they may not be purchasing marijuana now (e.g., someone else is buying it).

While most Manitobans do not plan to make such a purchase, the legalization will increase the number of users by about 65% (that is, from 15% who used in the last six months, to 24% who will likely make a purchase after it is legal).

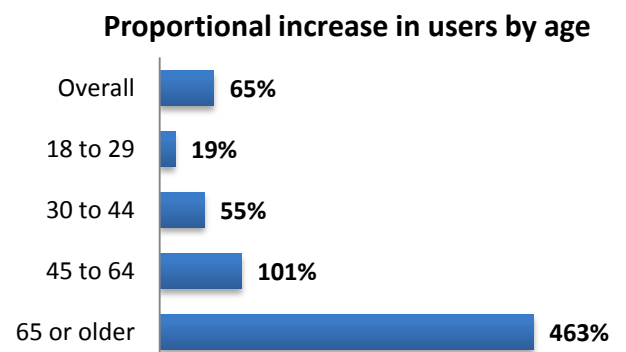
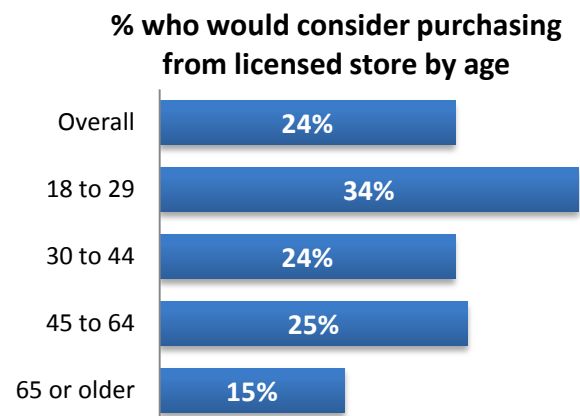


The biggest increase in users will be among the oldest Manitobans.

Proportionally, young adults 18 to 29 years of age will be the largest user group, with 34% saying that they would consider purchasing marijuana from a licensed store. Those 65 and older are the least likely to make such a purchase, although 15% would consider it.

While younger adults are more likely to use, the potential change in behaviour is drastically different among older cohorts. For instance, there will be a 463% increase in the number of users among those 65 and older, increasing from 3% reporting marijuana use in the past six months, to 15% who may consider purchasing it from a licensed seller when it is legal. Conversely, the smallest increase in the proportion of users will be among 18 to 29 year olds, increasing by 19% (from 29% who have used in the past six months, to 34% who will consider purchasing it once legal).

This suggests that legalization will have the biggest impact on older adults. Young adults who want to use marijuana are generally already doing so, and the fact that marijuana is currently illegal does not appear to be much of a barrier to use. However, among older Manitobans, the fact that marijuana is currently illegal or scarcely available is a significant barrier for those who might want to use it.



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METHODOLOGY

PRA conducted the survey from September 6 – October 2, 2017 using its Manitoba Omnibus, which is a monthly random-digit telephone survey of 800 Manitobans. This survey size yields an error rate of $\pm 3.5\%$ (19 times out of 20).

As any sample may not represent the population perfectly, PRA corrects statistically for discrepancies in gender, age, and income to ensure the sample corresponds as closely as possible to Manitoba's population based on Statistics Canada information.

PRA is an independent research and consulting company. Its head office in Winnipeg houses a research call centre and focus group facilities. Founded in 1988, the company conducts large- and small-scale quantitative and qualitative research in both official languages.

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