



# Manitoba Cannabis Survey II

Release date: February 2023

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Authority of Manitoba (LGCA) conducts research related to the industries it regulates. This research provides practical and accurate information for operational needs, legislative development and public education campaigns.

In October 2021, the LGCA conducted the Manitoba Cannabis Survey II (MCS II) with a sample of 2,000 adult Manitobans. This survey was a follow-up to the first Manitoba Cannabis Survey (MCS I) conducted in 2017 just prior to legalization of cannabis. The goal of these surveys was to develop baseline information on cannabis related knowledge and behaviours, and to monitor changes in how Manitobans use cannabis over time.

This report details the key findings from the 2021 MCS II. It builds on the 2017 MCS I and attempts to answer some of the more common cannabis related questions such as: Why do people consume cannabis? Are people consuming more cannabis since legalization? What types of cannabis are being consumed? And what do people know about the risks and myths typically associated with cannabis? Where possible, this report compares survey results from 2017 (MCS I) and 2021 (MCS II) to illustrate trends since legalization.



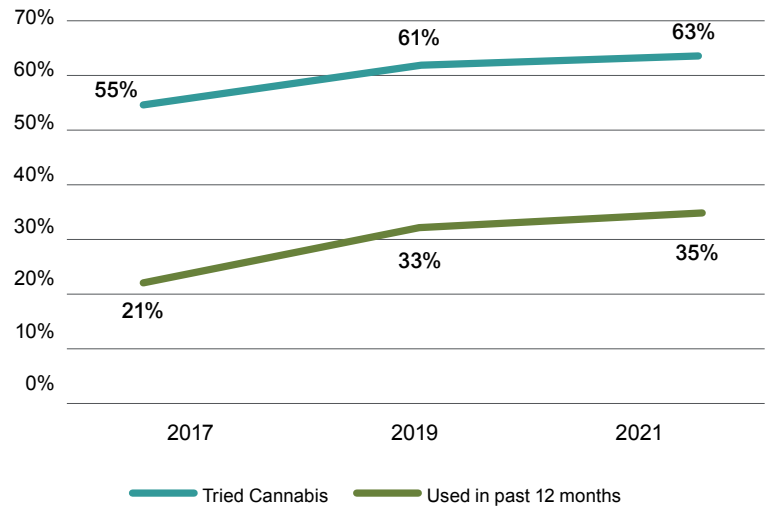
# CHANGES IN CANNABIS USE IN MANITOBA

## CANNABIS USE IN MANITOBA

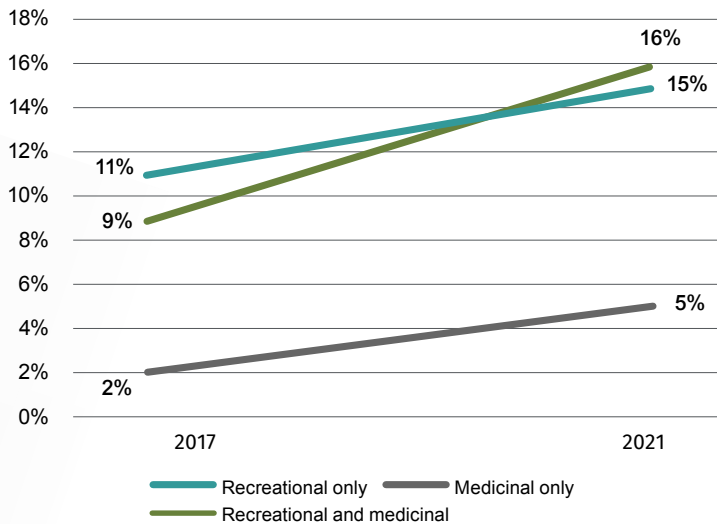
Prior to the legalization of cannabis in Canada, there was speculation that legalization would lead to a dramatic rise in cannabis consumption; however, lifetime use has only increased slightly over the past four years from 55% to 63%, whereas current use (last 12 months) has increased from 21% to 35%. The reported rate of active use in Manitoba is higher than the national average of 25% measured by the 2021 Canadian Cannabis Survey. However, the increase is within the expected range, as the LGCA's 2017 survey indicated that 21% of non-users were interested in trying cannabis after it became legal.

**Key demographic differences.** Cannabis use in the past year decreases with age, from 56% of those 19 to 24 years of age down to 17% of those 65 years of age and older. In addition, those living in northern Manitoba (54%) are most likely to have used cannabis in the past year.

Cannabis Use



Cannabis Use in Past Year



## CHANGE IN RECREATIONAL AND MEDICINAL USE <sup>1</sup>

The increase in cannabis use pre- and post-legalization is not limited to recreational use, as there has been a similar increase in cannabis use for self-reported medicinal purposes. With that being said, the majority of the increase from 2017 is due to an increase in recreational use.

**<sup>1</sup> A note on terminology:**

Consistent with the Cannabis Survey I (MCS I), the Cannabis Survey II (MCS II) uses the terms *recreational* and *medicinal* to identify two different purposes for which cannabis is used. The questions in which these terms were used were designed to determine the intent of the user, as opposed to whether or not they accessed cannabis through the federally regulated medical cannabis program. Since legalization of non-medical cannabis, much has changed in the way cannabis is available, the forms it takes and how it's used. In future surveys, the LGCA will adapt terminology to best reflect current trends and research trends and practices.

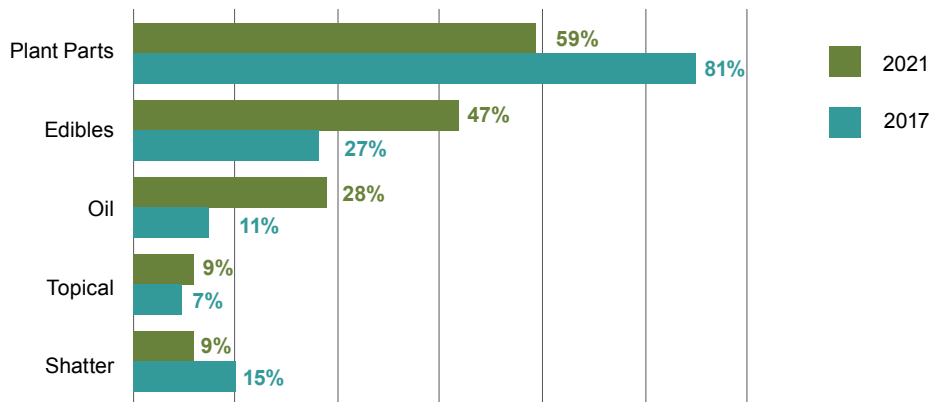
## AGE OF FIRST USE

The 2021 survey results show that among Manitobans who have used cannabis at least once in their lifetime, 62% first tried cannabis before 19 years of age, the current legal age in Manitoba. This is down from 68% of cannabis users in 2017 who reported using cannabis for the first time before they were 19 years of age. Public health recommends that young adults wait until the brain is fully developed (approximately by age 25) to minimize potential harm from cannabis use during periods of critical brain development (Fischer et al., 2022; Government of Canada, 2019).

## CHANGES IN TYPES OF CANNABIS USED

Cannabis in a dried or equivalent form was legalized in Canada on October 17, 2018, with cannabis edible products legalized a year later on October 17, 2019 (Justice Canada, 2021). The biggest shift in the types of cannabis being used pre- and post-legalization is towards edible and oil use, with edible use almost doubling from 2017 and oil use increasing by two and a half times. This change has come with a decreased use of plant parts, such as the bud or leaf, and use of shatter, which is considered to be a more dangerous form of cannabis.

Types of Cannabis Used



**Note:**

Cannabis users could use more than one type of cannabis.

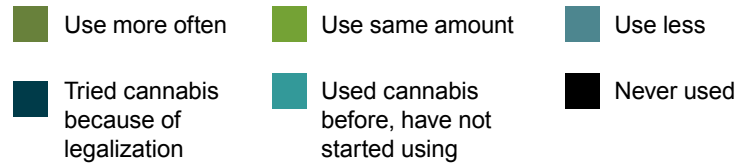
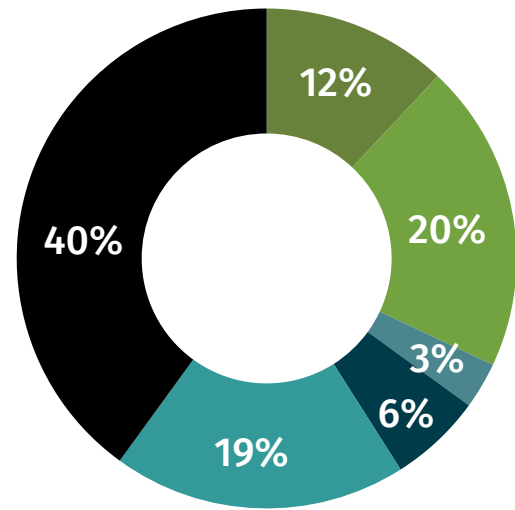


## IMPACT OF LEGALIZATION

Only 6% of Manitobans say they tried cannabis because of legalization, which is much lower than what results from the 2017 survey may have predicted, as 21% of Manitobans were deemed to be potential new users because of legalization.

**Key demographic differences.** Legalization seems to have the most impact by age, as the proportion who have tried cannabis or are using it more often decreases across age groups from 39% of 19 to 24 year olds to 9% of those 65 years of age or older.

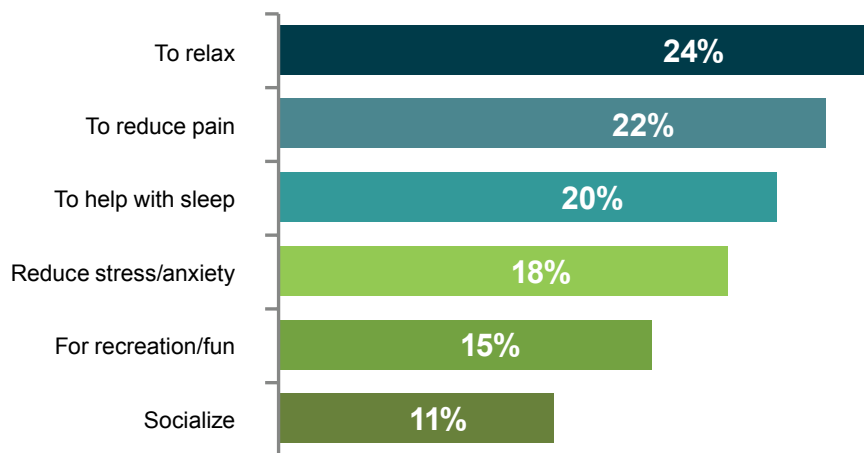
Impact of Legalization



## MOTIVATORS FOR USING CANNABIS

Among cannabis users, when asked to describe in their own words why they used cannabis, the most common reasons given were to relax, reduce pain or help with sleep. These were almost identical to the reasons given by users in the LGCA's 2017 survey.

Most Common Motivator



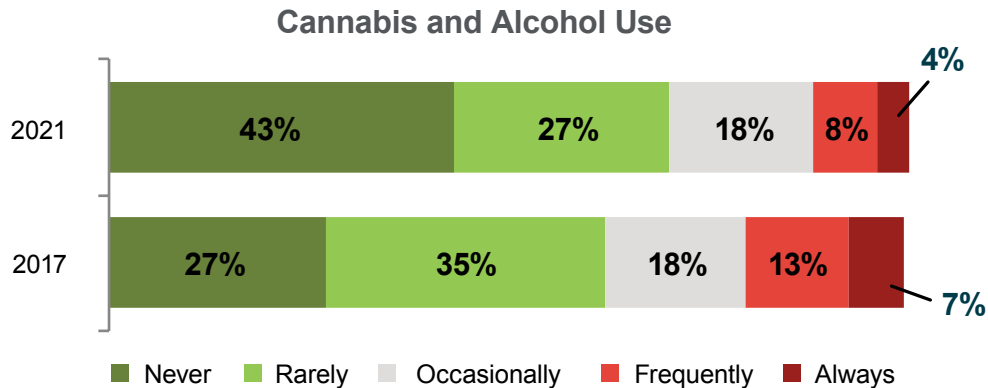
**Note:**

Cannabis users could give more than one reason for using cannabis.

## CANNABIS AND ALCOHOL USE

Among cannabis users, 43% say they never use cannabis in combination with alcohol, while, 4% say they always use them in combination. This is a positive shift from 2017, as fewer cannabis users are combining cannabis and alcohol, and doing so less often.<sup>2</sup>

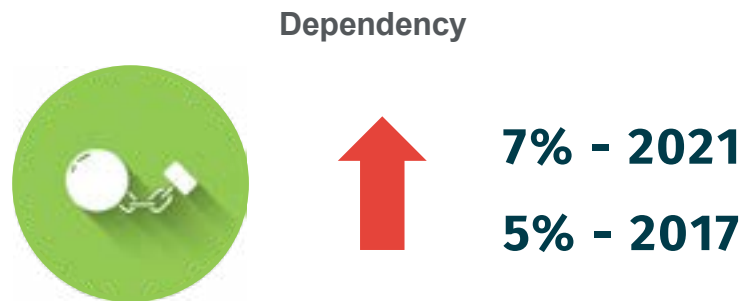
**Key demographic differences.** Among cannabis users, alcohol use with cannabis tends to differ within age groups. For example, the 19 to 24 years old age group is both most likely and least likely among all age groups to use cannabis and alcohol together. Ten percent of 19 to 24 year olds say they always use cannabis and alcohol together, while 50% of the same group say they never do.



## CANNABIS DEPENDENCE

Results from the 2021 survey show that approximately 7% of Manitobans may be classified as dependent on cannabis based on the CUDIT-R measure developed by Adamson et al., 2010. This compares to 5% of Manitobans who were classified as dependent users in 2017.<sup>3</sup> However, the proportion of Manitobans classified as dependent could range from 6% to 9% because many cannabis users could not be classified due to non-response to questions used in the CUDIT-R scoring. For 2021, when just cannabis users (within the past 12 months) are assessed, the proportion defined as dependent increases to 19%.

**Key demographic differences.** Cannabis dependency decreases with age, as the proportion drops from 24% of 19 to 24 year olds who are classified as dependent to only 1% of those 65 years of age and older. There are also considerably higher rates of dependency among northern Manitobans (17%), men (10%), and those in the lowest income household (under \$20,000 – 18%).



<sup>2</sup> The results for 2017 differ from results previously reported by the LGCA because the analysis did not account for the fact that those who had not consumed alcohol in the past 12 months were not asked how often they use cannabis and alcohol together. This was corrected in the analyses in this report by including those who had not consumed alcohol in the past 12 months as "never".

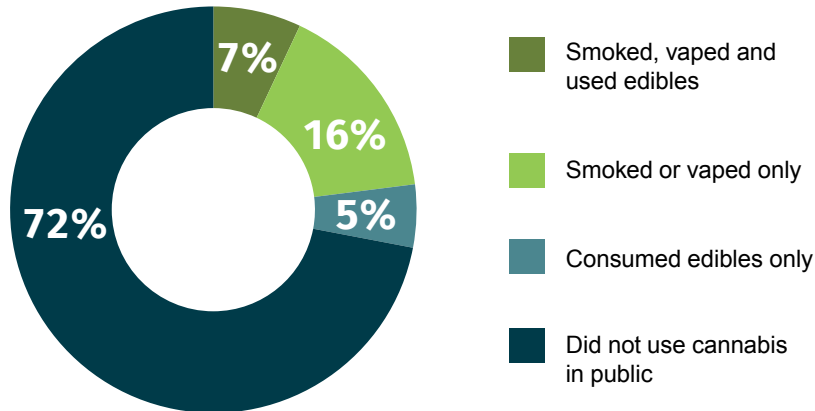
<sup>3</sup> The results for dependency for 2017 and 2021 differ from previous LGCA reports because the cut-off for the CUDIT-R score was set as 13 or higher, instead of 12 or higher. Thus, the calculated dependency scores previously reported excluded those who scored 12 on the CUDIT-R.

## CANNABIS USE IN PUBLIC

Among cannabis users, 28% say they have used cannabis in public in the past 12 months, with more saying they smoke or vape (23%) versus using edibles (12%).

**Key demographic differences.** Among cannabis users, Manitobans 19 to 44 years of age and those in lower income households are most likely to have used cannabis in public. Only 12% of cannabis users 45 years of age and older said they used cannabis in public in the past 12 months.

Use of Cannabis in Public

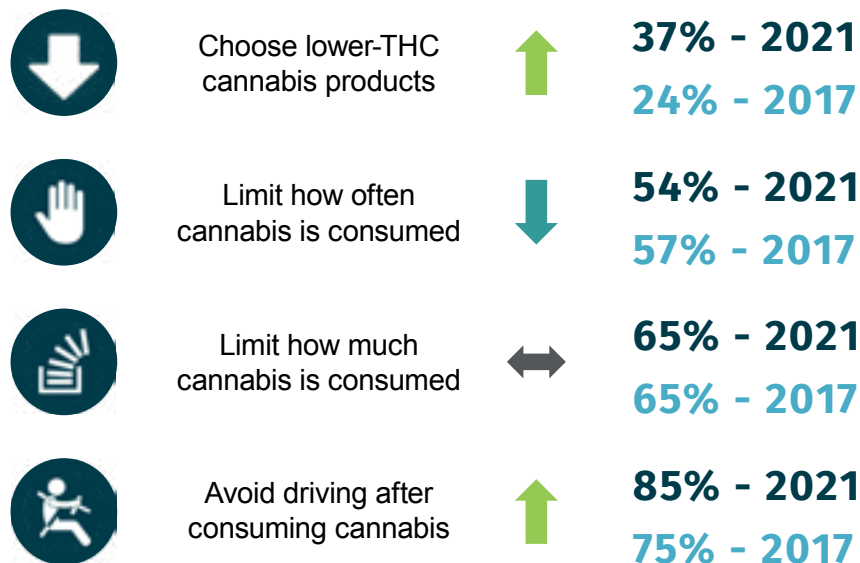


## RISK REDUCTION STRATEGIES

Compared to 2017, there was a significant increase in the proportion of cannabis users utilizing lower-risk strategies at least often, most notably a 10-percentage point increase in those who *avoid driving after consuming cannabis* from 75% to 85%.

**Key demographic differences.** Women (28%) are more than twice as likely as men (12%) to say they always choose lower-THC cannabis products. Manitobans aged 25 to 34 years (61%) are least likely among age groups to say they *always avoid driving after consuming cannabis*. This may speak to a need for targeted education among this age group about the risk of driving after using cannabis.

Use of Lower Risk Strategies - Often or Always





## REGULATION AND EDUCATION

When asked about the public health and safety rules, Manitobans put a fair amount of emphasis on rules and safety related to Manitobans' underage use, specifically rules to prevent purchasing by those underage or using of cannabis by those underage. There was also a strong desire for a focus on rules related to cannabis use and driving.



77%

Rules to prevent  
underage purchasing



73%

Rules on  
driving limits



69%

Rules to prevent  
underage use



61%

Pure and safer product,  
without substances or  
chemicals

### Top Public Education Needs



73%

Drug-impaired  
driving laws



72%

Health risks of  
cannabis use



72%

Health risks of  
cannabis for  
people under 25



57%

Safer products/  
quality control





# CANNABIS MYTHS

## MANITOBANS' ESTIMATE OF CANNABIS USE

Manitobans are fairly knowledgeable when it comes to estimating cannabis use in the province, as they estimate that 42% of Manitobans used cannabis in the past 12 months, which is not that far off from the 35% who admitted to using in the 2021 survey. It is worth noting that in 2017, Manitobans estimated that 42% had used cannabis in the past 12 months, when only 21% had admitted to using.

**Key demographic differences.** Manitobans' estimates of cannabis use among the public is strongly tied to their current use, as those demographic groups that were most likely to have used cannabis in the last year, also estimate a higher proportion of Manitobans who have used. Most telling is that cannabis users estimate that 49% of Manitobans have used in the past 12 months compared to non-users who estimate that 37% have used.

## CANNABIS RISKS

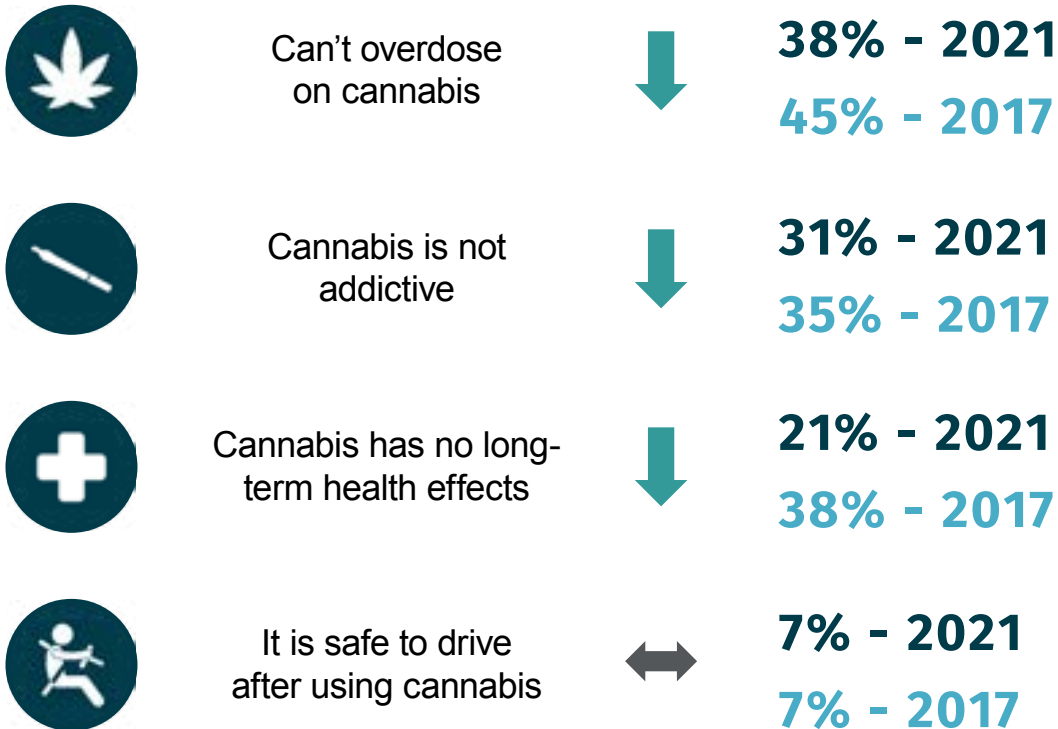
When asked to identify risks of using cannabis, 19% of Manitobans thought there were risks associated with cannabis use, but could not identify any risks. In addition, 8% specifically said there were no risks to using cannabis.

## BELIEF IN CANNABIS MYTHS

Compared to 2017, Manitobans' belief in three of the four myths tested about cannabis is down considerably, with the fourth unchanged from 2017.

**Key demographic differences.** Cannabis users are much more likely than non-users to believe in each of the myths, most notably 15% of cannabis users believe it is safe to drive after using cannabis compared to 3% of non-users. There is also evidence that younger Manitobans are more likely to believe in several of these myths. These two groups will be important for the LGCA to target with future educational campaigns.

### Belief in Myths

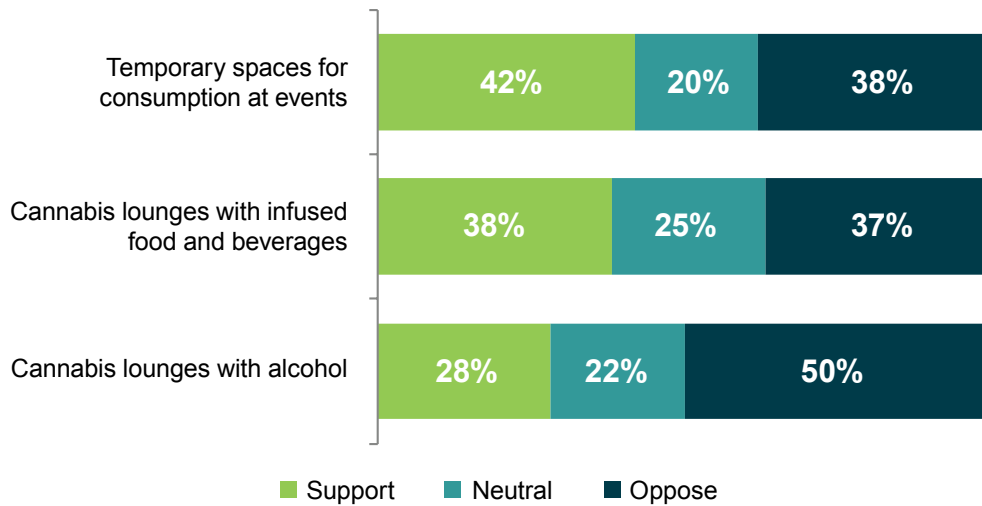


# SUPPORT FOR CANNABIS CONSUMPTION SPACES

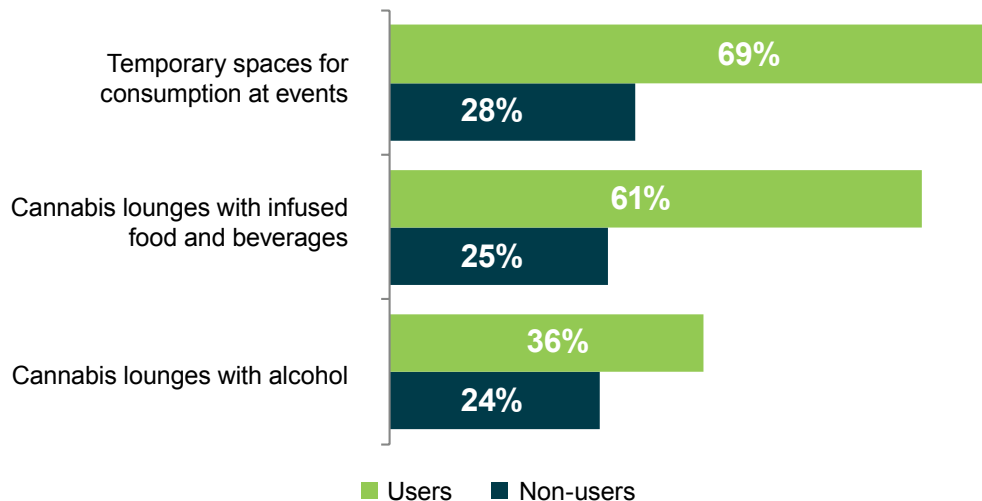
Manitobans appear to be fairly split about expanding cannabis sales and consumption in the province, with almost equal support or opposition for *allowing temporary spaces at events to buy and consume cannabis-infused products* (42% support versus 38% oppose) and *allowing cannabis consumption lounges and cafes where people can purchase cannabis-infused food and beverages, but no smoking or vaping* (38% support versus 37% oppose). However, there is fairly strong opposition to *allowing cannabis lounges to serve alcohol* (28% support versus 50% oppose).

**Key demographic differences.** Support for cannabis consumption spaces is highly correlated with current cannabis use, as those demographic groups that are more likely to have used cannabis in the past 12 months are more likely to support these spaces. The graph below shows support for the three types of cannabis consumption spaces by cannabis users and non-users. Cannabis users strongly support temporary spaces and cannabis lounges, but appear to feel less strongly about allowing lounges to also serve alcohol.

Support for Expansion



Support for Expansion by Cannabis Use



## A FINAL THOUGHT

These findings will assist the LGCA with developing future cannabis-related public education, and the information in this report will be shared with the public and other provincial stakeholders. Results from this survey illustrate that although cannabis consumption increased in Manitoba since legalization, most people in Manitoba use cannabis only occasionally (once a month or less). Importantly, the use of concentrates such as shatter, a higher risk form of cannabis, decreased since legalization. Of particular note is the decline in individuals who believe in myths related to cannabis, as well as the increased use of risk reduction strategies like avoiding driving after consuming cannabis. Support for cannabis consumption spaces continues to remain mixed.

Going forward, the LGCA will continue to monitor the evolving cannabis industry and will engage with the public and stakeholders regularly.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The LGCA is grateful to the Manitobans who participated in this research, the skilled data collection of PRA Inc. and for the suggestions and comments from the LGCA's external ethics review panel.

## METHODOLOGY

The LGCA contracted PRA Inc., a social research firm, to conduct a mixed-mode survey of Manitobans 19 years of age (the legal age for non-medical cannabis use in the province) and older, using an online research panel as the primary mode of conducting the survey. The sample was supplemented with random-digit telephone survey to reach under-represented populations. The LGCA developed the 57-item survey questionnaire based on previous surveys, existing psychometric survey instruments, and feedback from the LGCA's external ethics panel. PRA Inc. provided feedback on the questionnaire based on their expertise and telephone pre-tests (n = 25) to improve the flow and comprehension of survey questions.

Sampling techniques ensured representation from the major regions of the province, including Winnipeg, Brandon, southern Manitoba, and northern Manitoba. The online panel survey took place between October 28 and November 17, 2021, with 1,618 completed surveys and an average completion time of under 12 minutes. Response rate for the online panel was 33% (though there are no industry standards for calculating panel response rates).

Telephone surveying supplemented the sample in regions where the online panel would not meet desired quota (specifically in Brandon and northern Manitoba regions). The telephone-sampling frame included both landline and cell phone numbers. The telephone response rate was 20% and average survey length was under 14 minutes. Telephone fielding took place between October 29 and November 22, 2021, with 382 participants for a combined total sample of 2,000 participants.

Outcomes for the survey can be found in the table on the following page.

	Panel	Telephone	Total
Total attempted (A)	7,078	14,096	21,174
1. Not in service	954	5,321	6,275
2. Fax	-	35	35
3. Business or non-residence	-	59	59
Total eligible (B)	6,124	8,681	14,805
4. Busy	-	1,356	1,356
5. Answering machine	-	2,202	2,202
6. No answer	3,946	1,086	5,032
7/8. Language/illness/incapability	-	234	234
9. Eligible respondent not available	-	127	127
Total asked (C)	2,178	3,676	5,854
10. Household refusal	-	22	22
11. Respondent refusal	-	1,913	1,913
12. Qualified respondent break off	97	7	104
Cooperative contacts (D)	2,081	1,734	3,815
13. Disqualified	463	1,352	1,815
14. Completed interviews	1,618	382	2,000
Refusal rate = (10+11+12)/C	(97/2,178) = 4%	(1,942/3,676) = 22%	(2,039/5,854) = 34.8%
Response rate = D / B	(2,081/6,124) = 33%	(1,734/8,681) = 20%	(3,815/14,805) = 25.8%

## MORE INFORMATION

The LGCA is created by The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Act (the Act), and, with respect to its gaming accountabilities, as authorized by the Criminal Code (Canada). The Act and associated regulations establish and empower the LGCA to regulate liquor, gaming, cannabis and horse racing in Manitoba. In addition to public education, the LGCA's mandate includes independent and collaborative research related to the liquor, gaming, cannabis and horse racing industries. Research results inform policy advisory activities, operational programs and services, and social responsibility initiatives.

For more information about this publication or about the LGCA, visit our website, [LGCamb.ca](http://LGCamb.ca), or contact us by email at [research@LGCamb.ca](mailto:research@LGCamb.ca), or by phone at **204-927-5300** or **1-800-782-0363** (Manitoba only toll-free).

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