



# Marijuana legalization: New risks for children

December 3, 2015

# Executive summary (or, “Why should I care?”)

- Legalized marijuana significantly changes the way pot is used and abused—and **creates new risks for children**
  - A mass market creates a **tobacco-like industry**
  - **Improved access and changed perceptions** → increased use among minors
  - A wide variety of **new marijuana products attractive to kids** (e.g., candy, sodas)
  - **Marketing to children**
- Marijuana use at home, especially in states that have legalized marijuana, **may pose additional risks to child safety**
  - **Serious injuries**, such as poisoning/accidental ingestion and burns
  - **Illegal underage use**
  - **Road safety** issues
- **Attitudes about marijuana use at home** may therefore be important in gauging risk to children
  - **False opinions about marijuana** (e.g., getting high makes you a better driver)
  - **Types of marijuana products present** at home

# Agenda

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1 The new marijuana industry

2 New risks to children

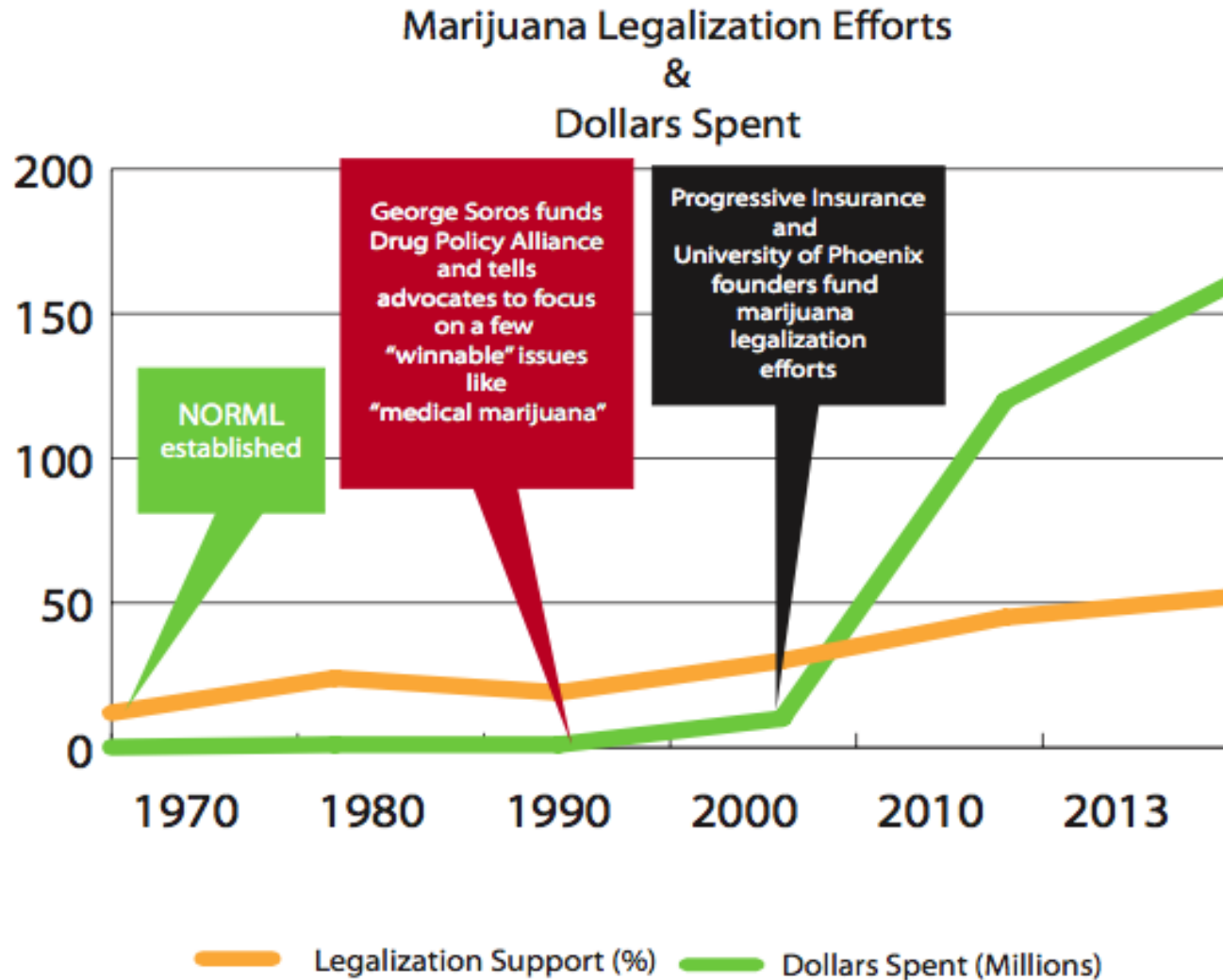
3 Attitudes at home

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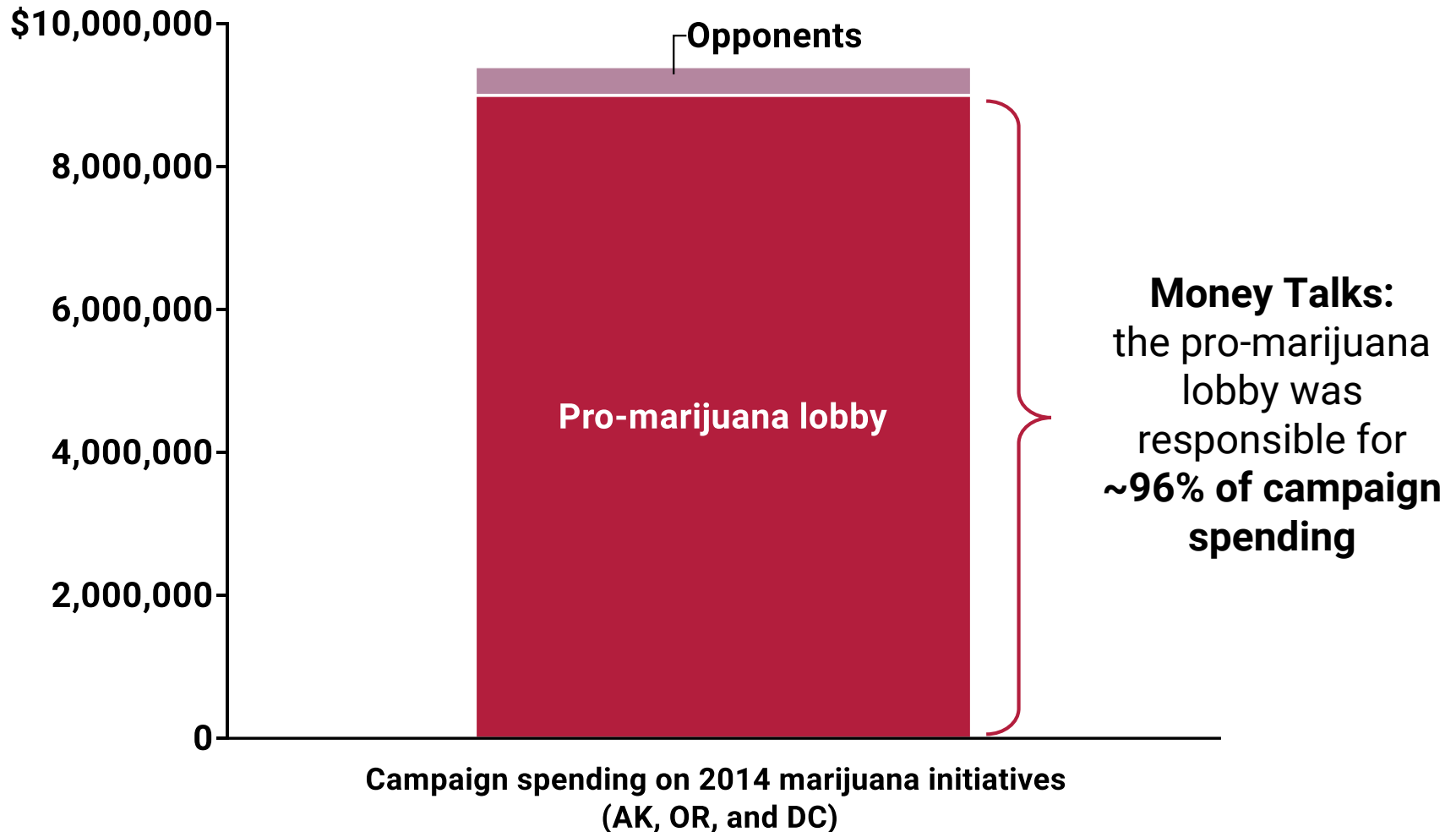
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# Marijuana legalizers are pouring millions of dollars into lobbying



# Why did marijuana initiatives succeed in Alaska, Oregon, and DC in 2014? Follow the money.



# Legalization has birthed a marijuana industry, fueled by private equity and Wall Street



NYC-based private equity firm focused on cannabis



\$26 million round of funding closed July 2015



Partnership with Willie Nelson to develop a marijuana brand



Seattle-based private equity firm investing exclusively in pot



Secured the first institutional investment in cannabis

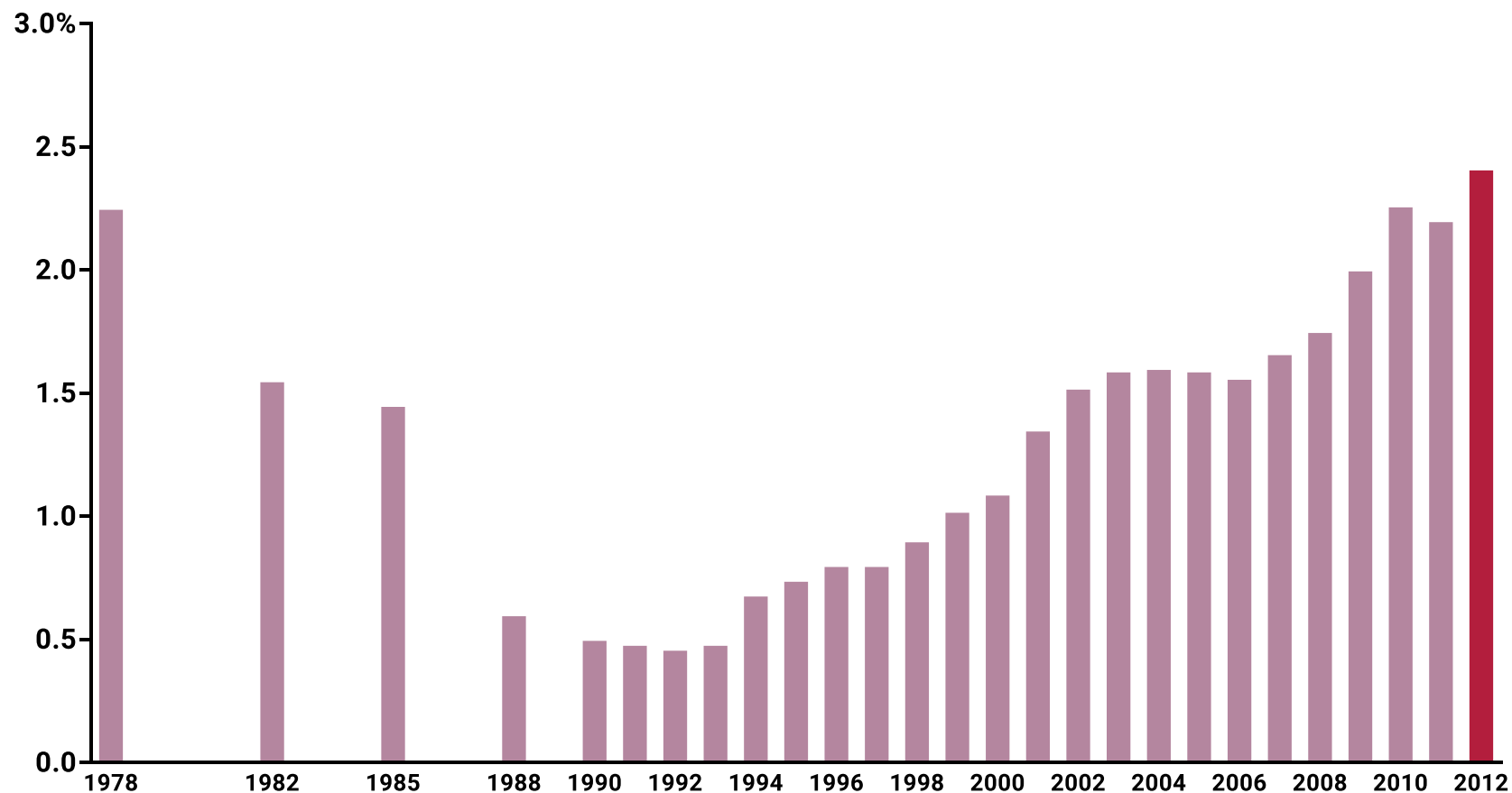


Launched the world's first global cannabis brand, "Marley Natural"



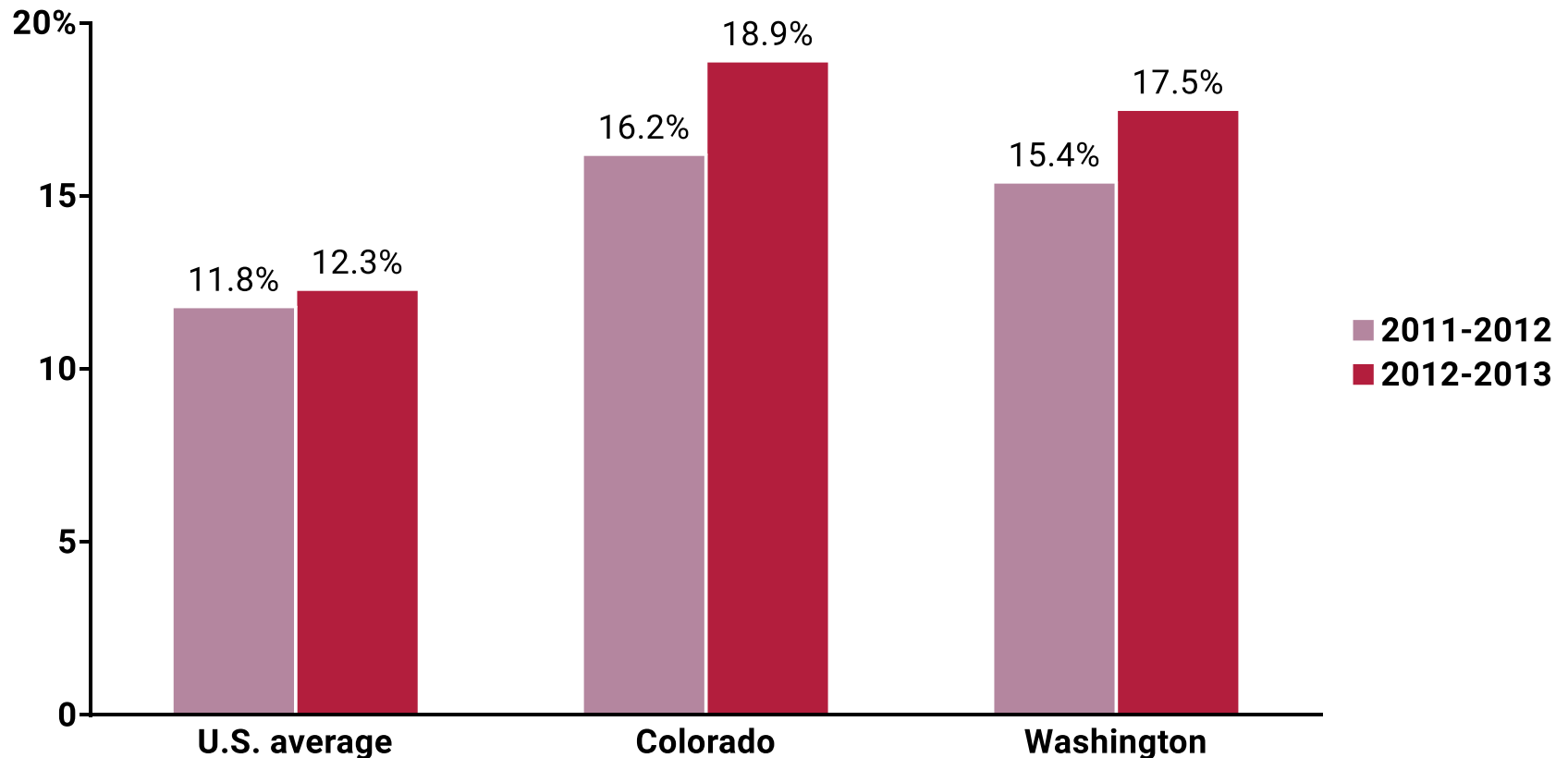
# The legalization movement correlates with a steep rise in daily marijuana use

Percentage of people in the United State using marijuana daily



# This rise in use is particularly pronounced in states that have legalized pot for recreational use

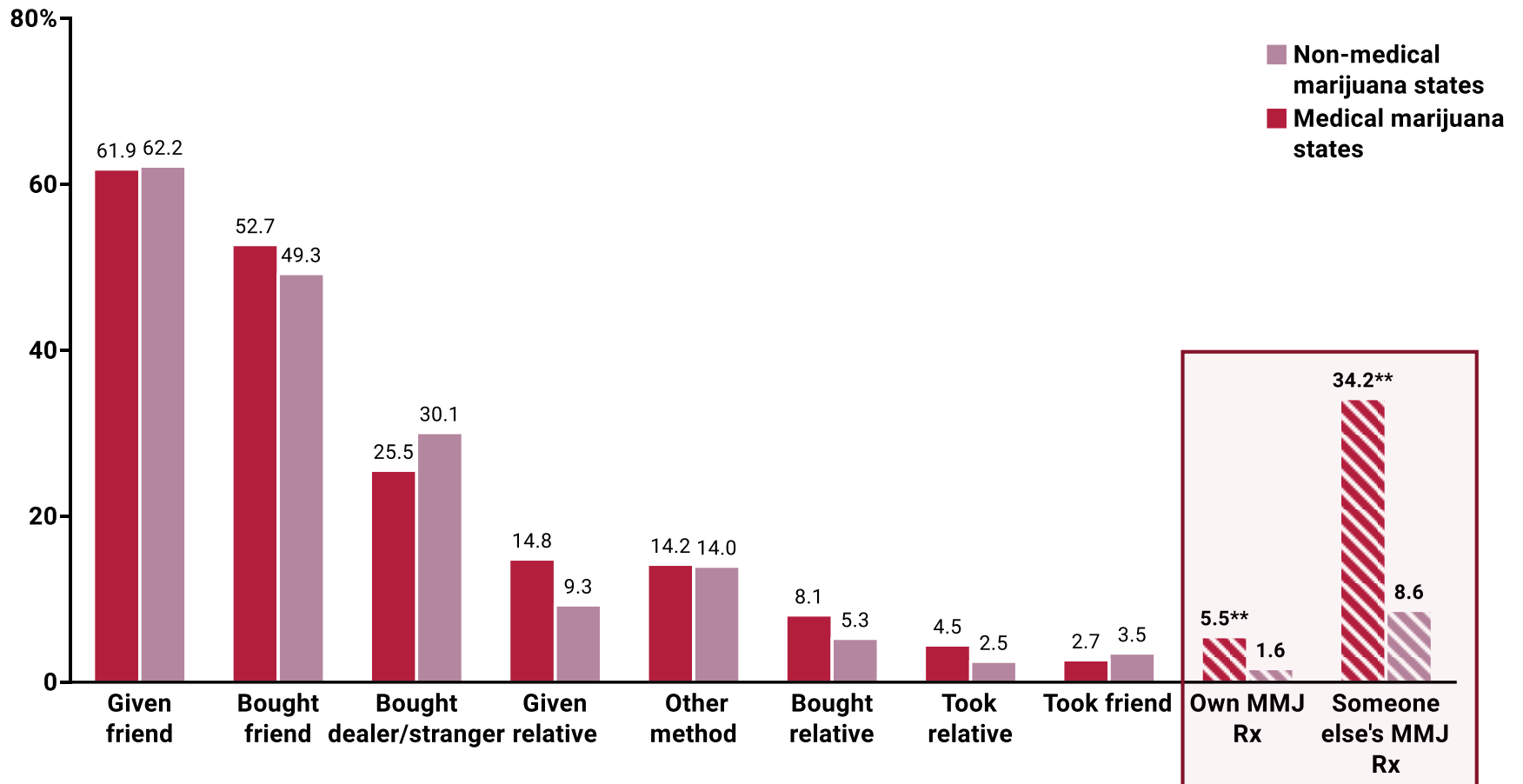
Percentage of population ages 12 and up who used marijuana in the past year



# Retail distribution of marijuana leads to increased access by children

## Source of Marijuana\* among 12<sup>th</sup> Graders in 2012 and 2013, by State Policy

\*Sources are not mutually exclusive

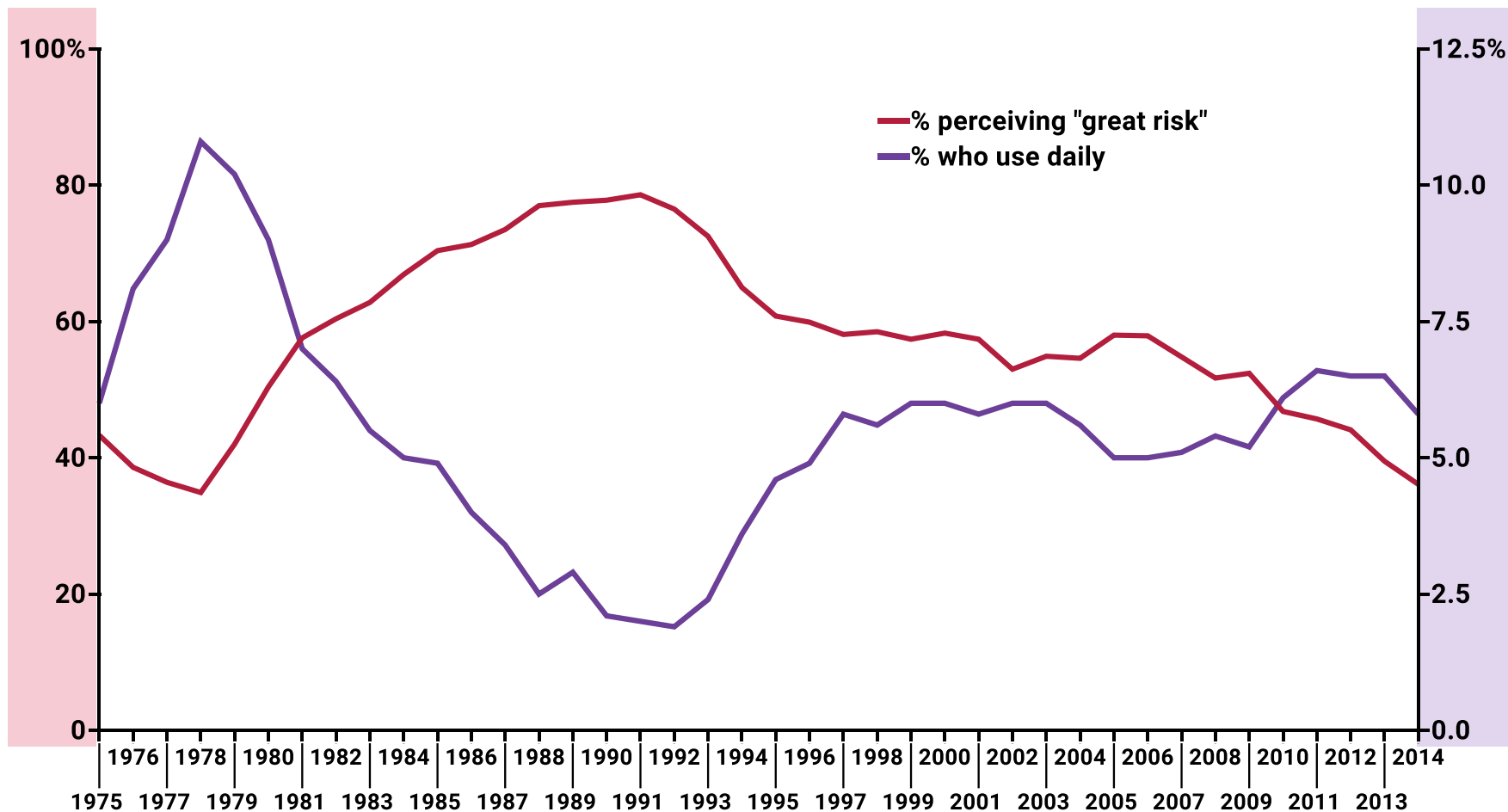


\*\* Statistically significant difference

# More children use marijuana if they perceive the drug as safe

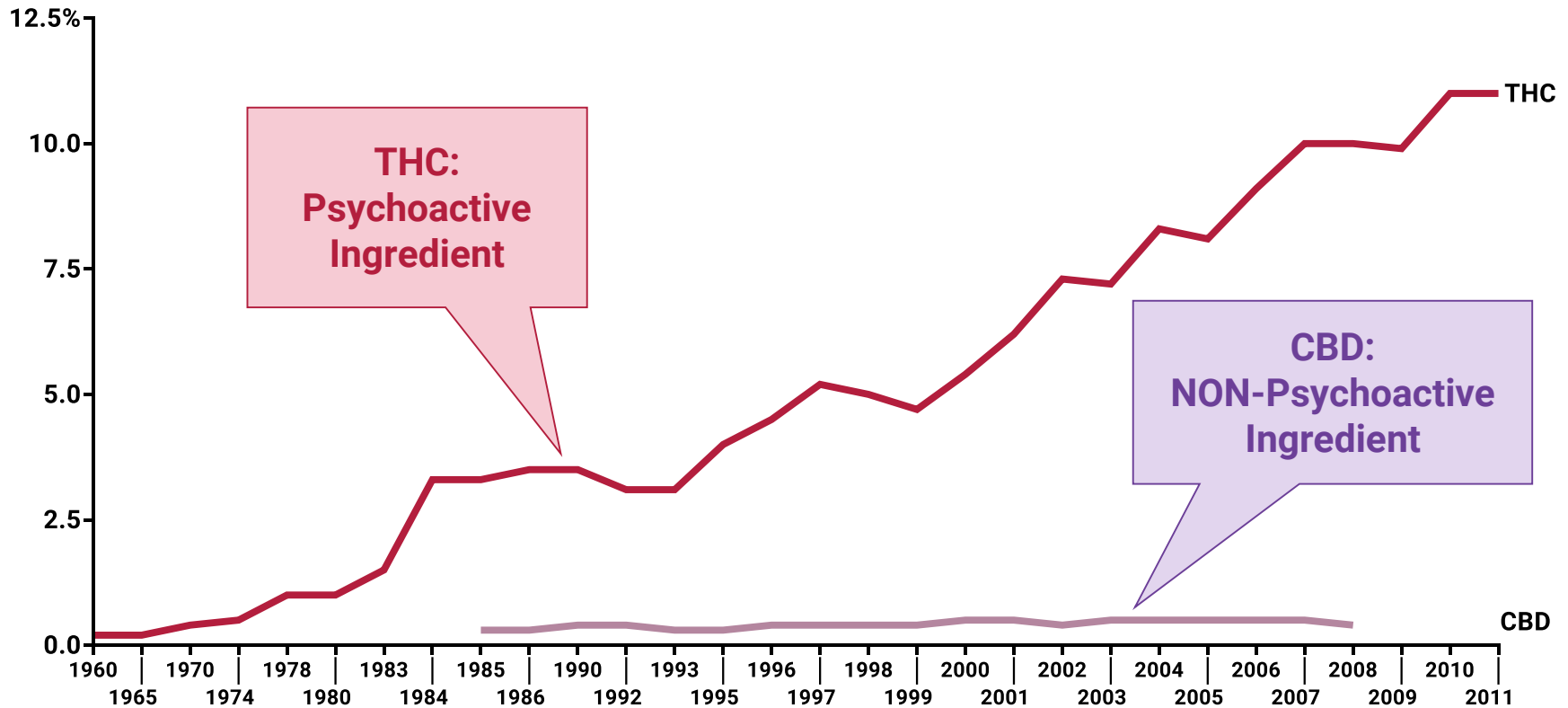
12th grade students perceiving "great risk" in regular marijuana use

12th grade students using marijuana daily



# Meanwhile, pot has become stronger and more dangerous

Average THC and CBD levels in the United States



CBD							0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4				
THC	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.5	3.3	3.3	3.5	3.5	3.1	3.1	4.0	4.5	5.2	5.0	4.7	5.4	6.2	7.3	7.2	8.3	8.1	9.1	10.0	10.0	9.9	11.0	11.0

# The marijuana industry has diversified its product line—some products contain up to 98% THC



*"Green Crack"*  
wax



*"Ear Wax"*



Butane Hash Oil  
(BHO)



Hash Oil Capsules



*"Budder"*

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# Companies in legalized states market high-THC products in mass media



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# The industry is also expanding distribution channels, similar to those for tobacco products



# Edible marijuana products are particularly enticing to children



# Industry lobbyists are also fighting restrictions on ads targeting children

- The marijuana industry successfully sued to strike down a law that limited children's access to marijuana magazines **containing cartoon ads and coupons for one dollar joints**
- Recently, an industry group sued to **block a law banning pot ads on TV, radio, and online media outlets**



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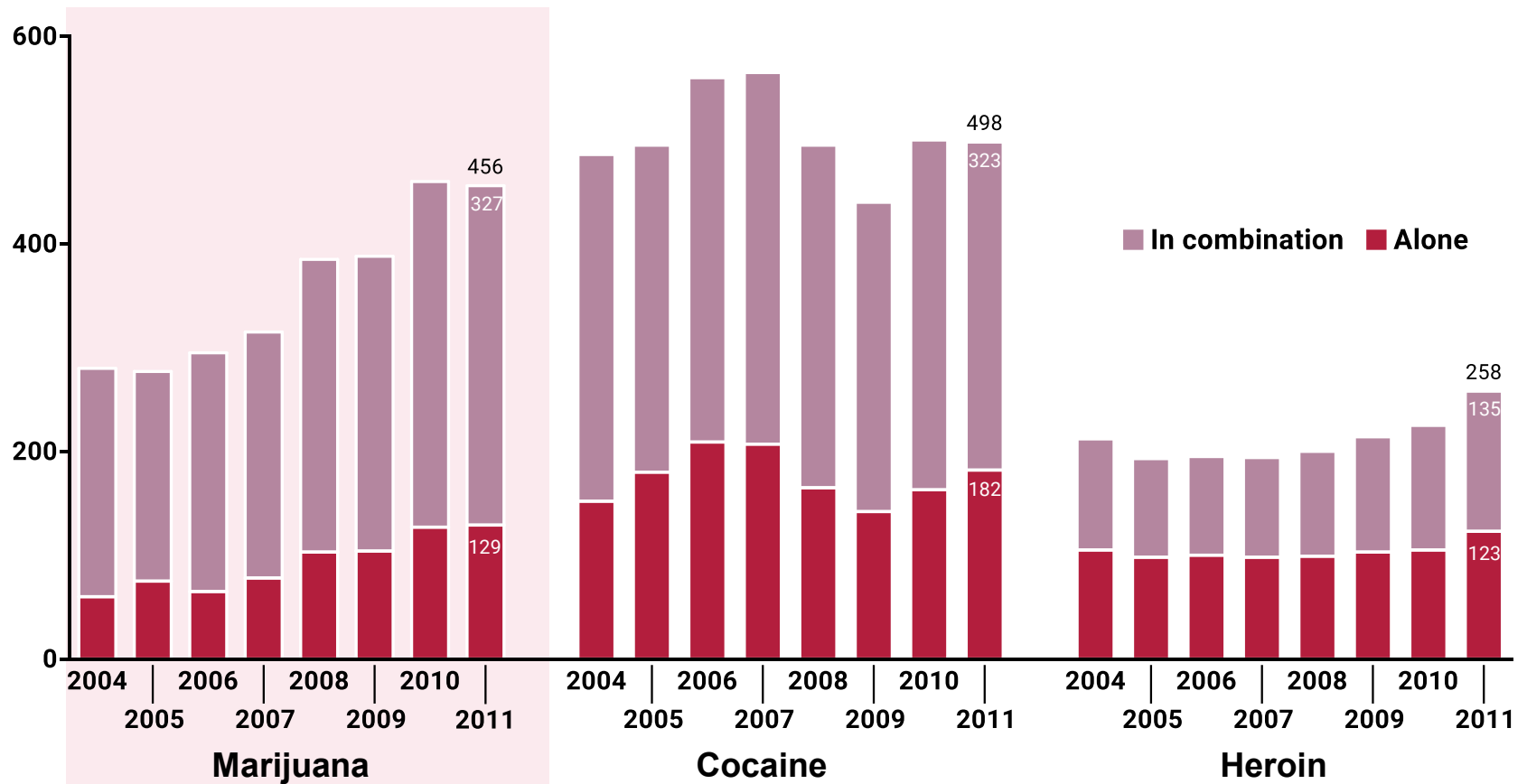
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# Marijuana-related emergency room visits have risen sharply, both in relative and absolute terms

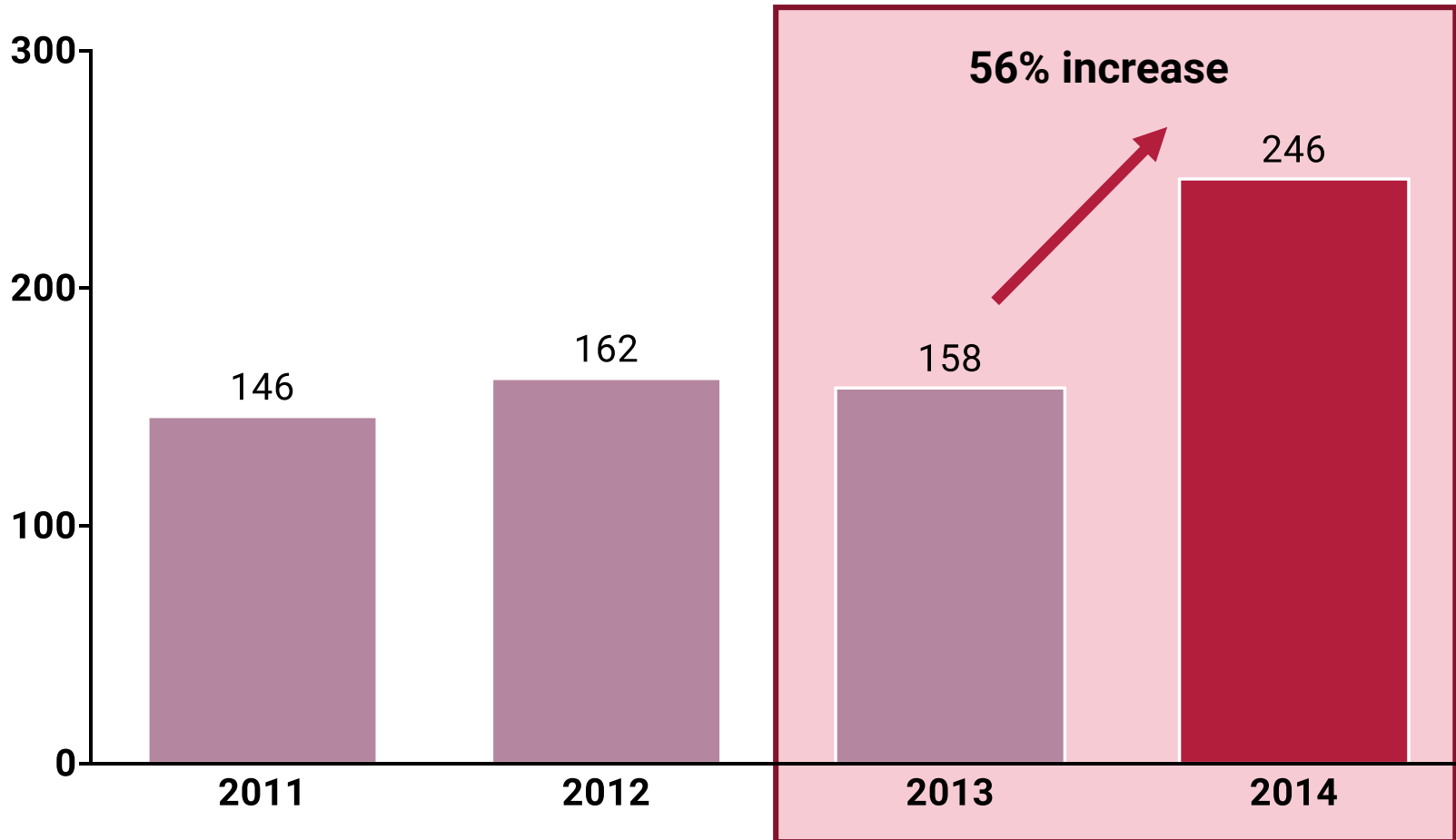
## Number of Emergency Department Visits Involving Marijuana, Cocaine, or Heroin

# of emergency-department visits  
(in thousands)



# Emergency marijuana-related calls to the WA Poison Center have skyrocketed post-legalization

Exposure calls related to marijuana



# Accidental ingestion by children is up in CO

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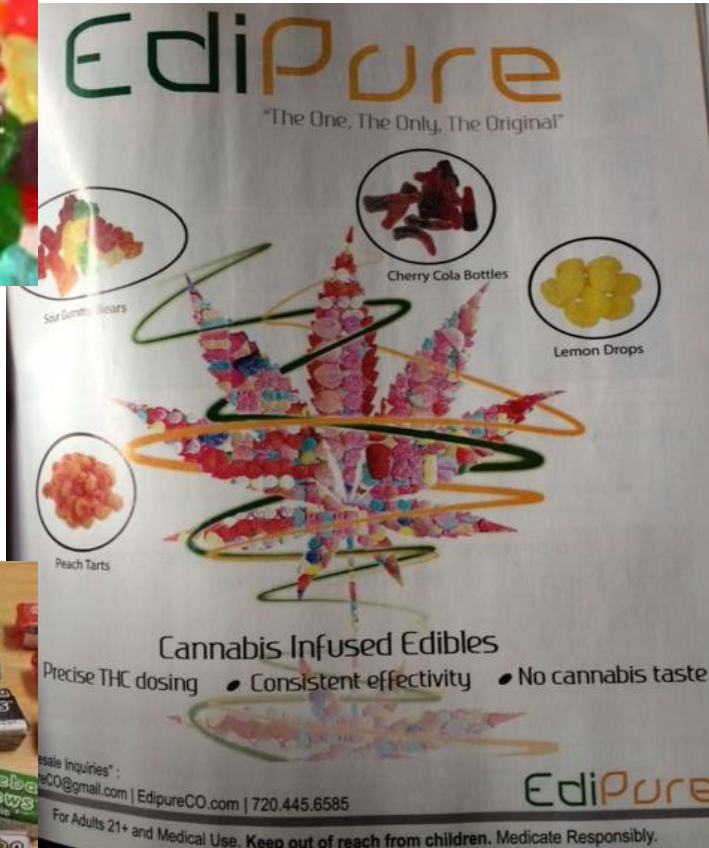
- Between 2008 and 2011, an **average of 4 children between the ages of 3 and 7 were sent to the ER** for unintentional marijuana ingestion.
- In 2013, **eight children went to the CO children's hospital** for accidental ingestion
- In the first half of 2014, at least 14 children had already been sent to the ER for accidentally ingesting marijuana products -- **more than doubling from the year before**



# Marijuana edible displays



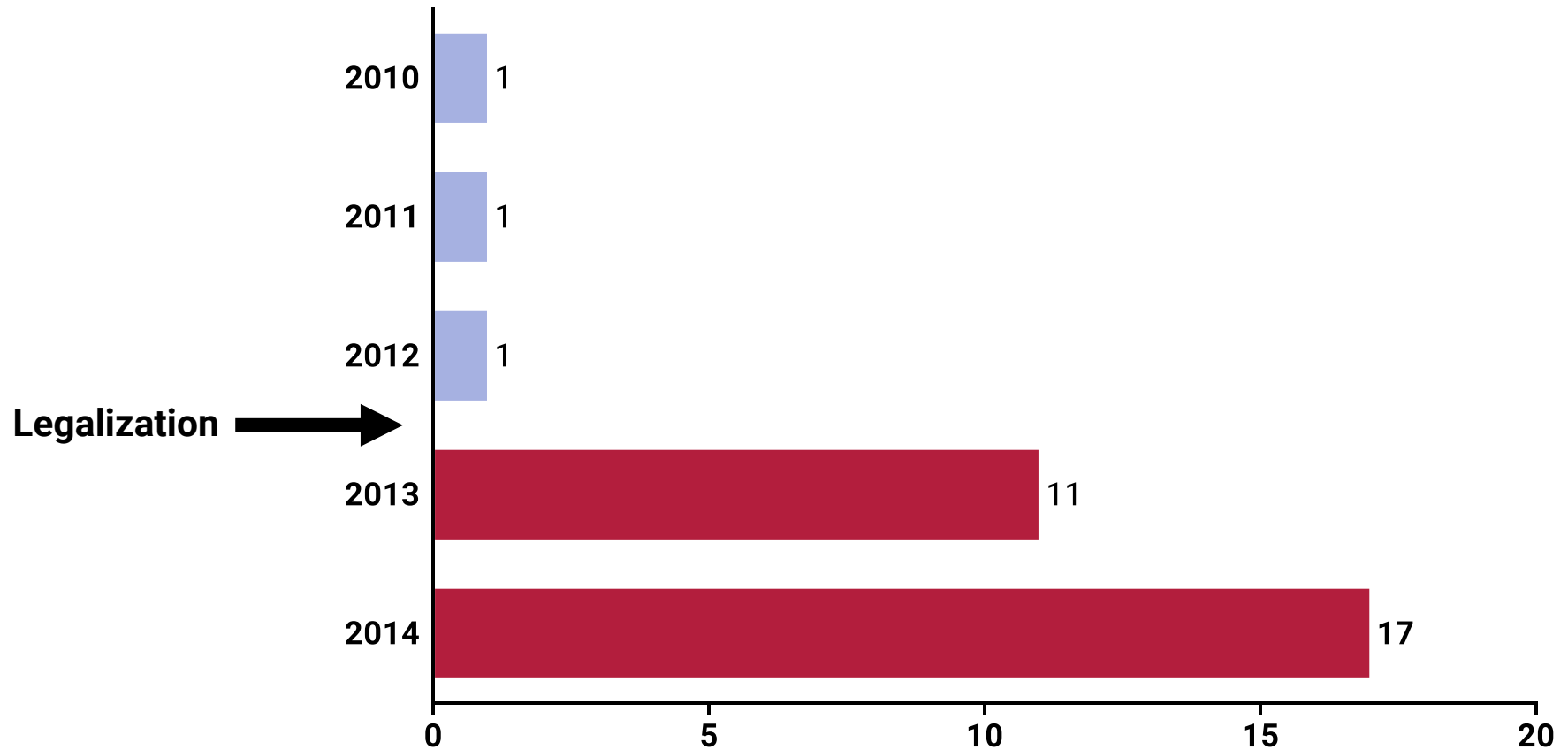
# Edibles: a danger to Colorado's children



Doctors at the UCH and Children's Hospital Colorado emergency departments **identified edible marijuana as the culprit behind the most troubling cases** there, including severe burns and cycling vomiting syndrome.

# Burns: An unexpected consequence of increased marijuana use

Number of cases with self-admitted burn victims related to marijuana in Colorado, 2010-14





## Teen marijuana arrests are up in Denver

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- Arrests for marijuana use in Denver public schools **increased by 6% between 2013 and 2014**

# Teen admissions to drug treatment are also up

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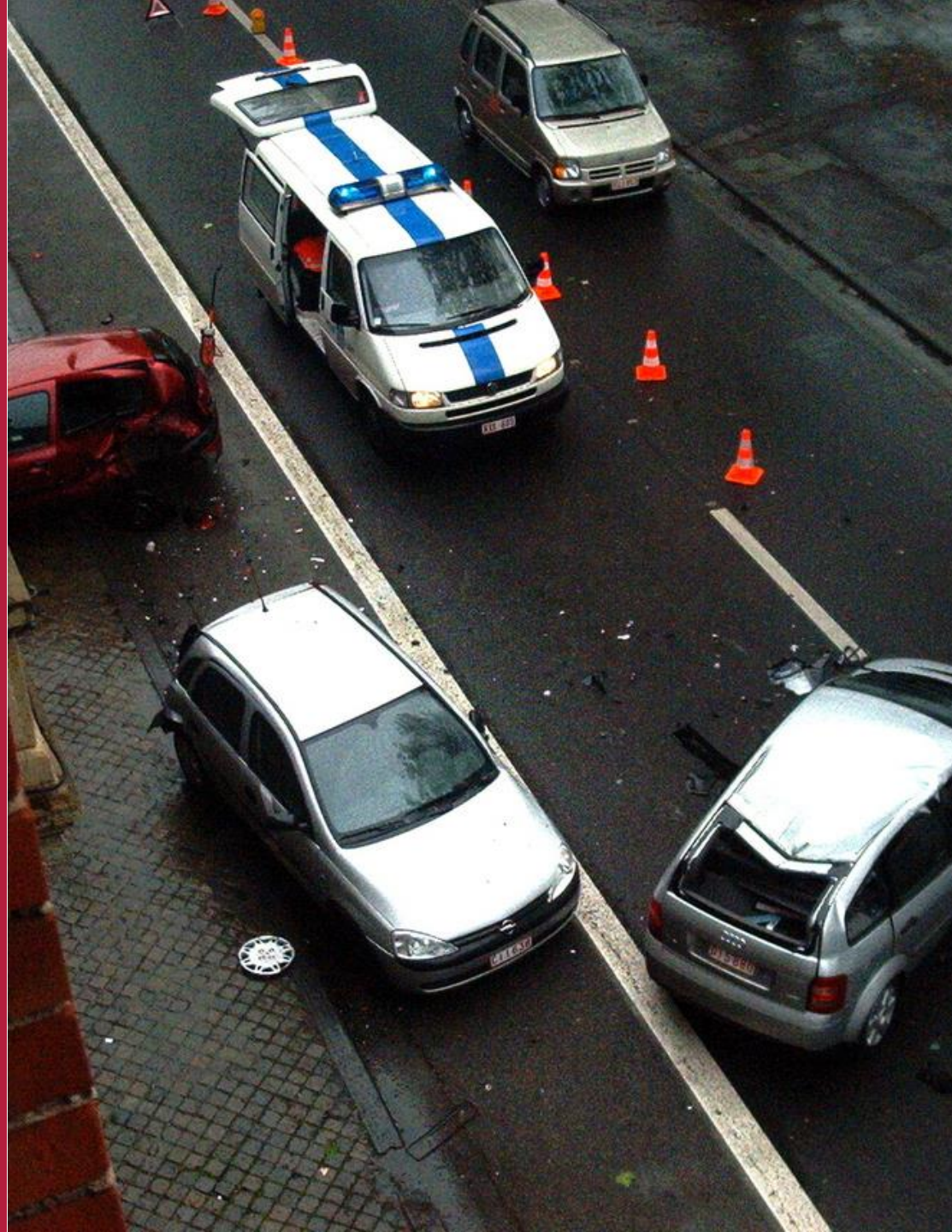
- Teen admissions to treatment for marijuana use at the Arapahoe House treatment network in CO **increased by 66%** between 2011 and 2014



# Increased use can lead to increased drugged driving

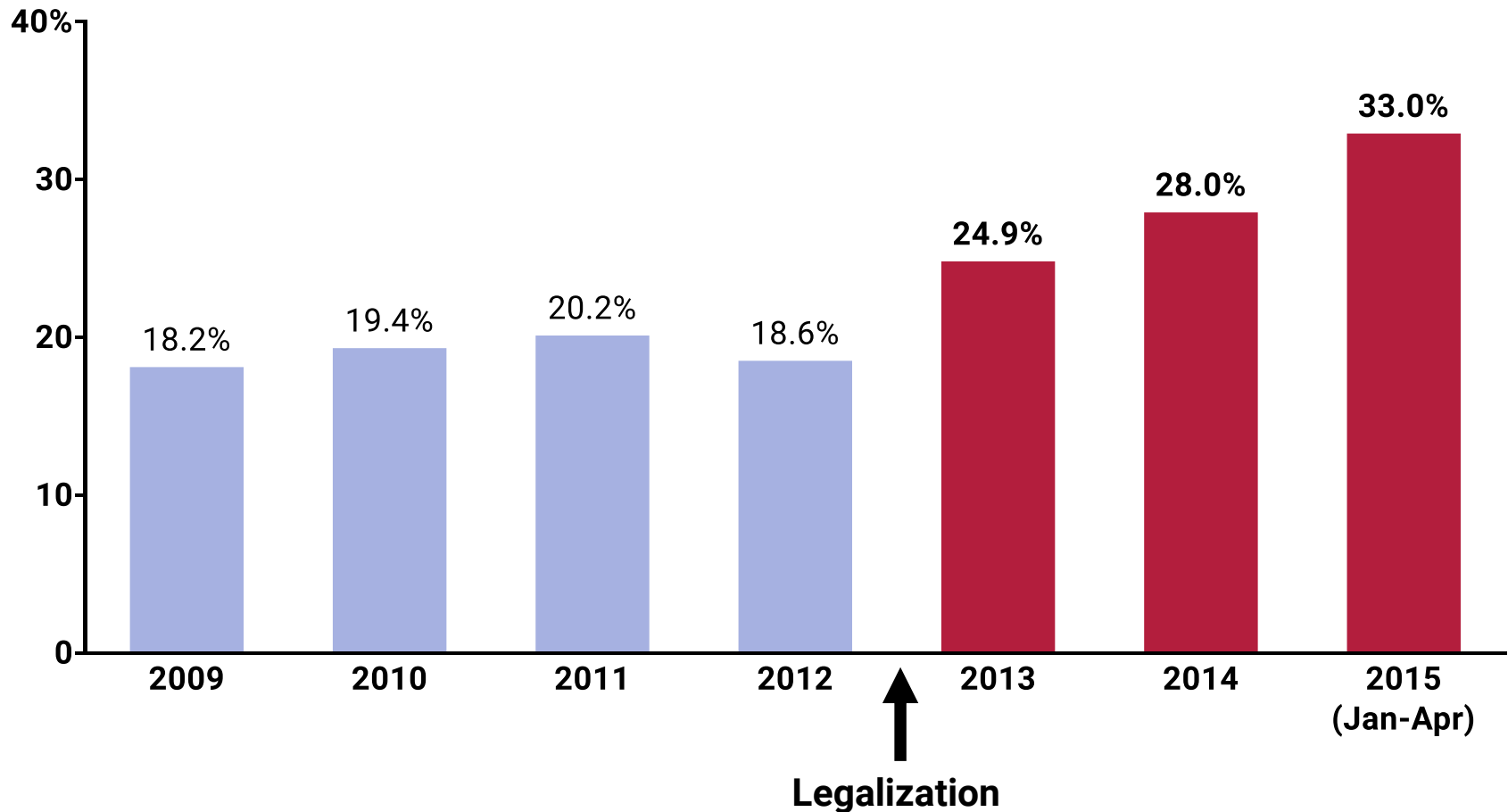
“Drivers who test positive for marijuana or self-report using marijuana are more than **twice as likely** as other drivers to be involved in motor vehicle crashes.”

- Mu-Chen Li, J.E.,  
et al., 2011



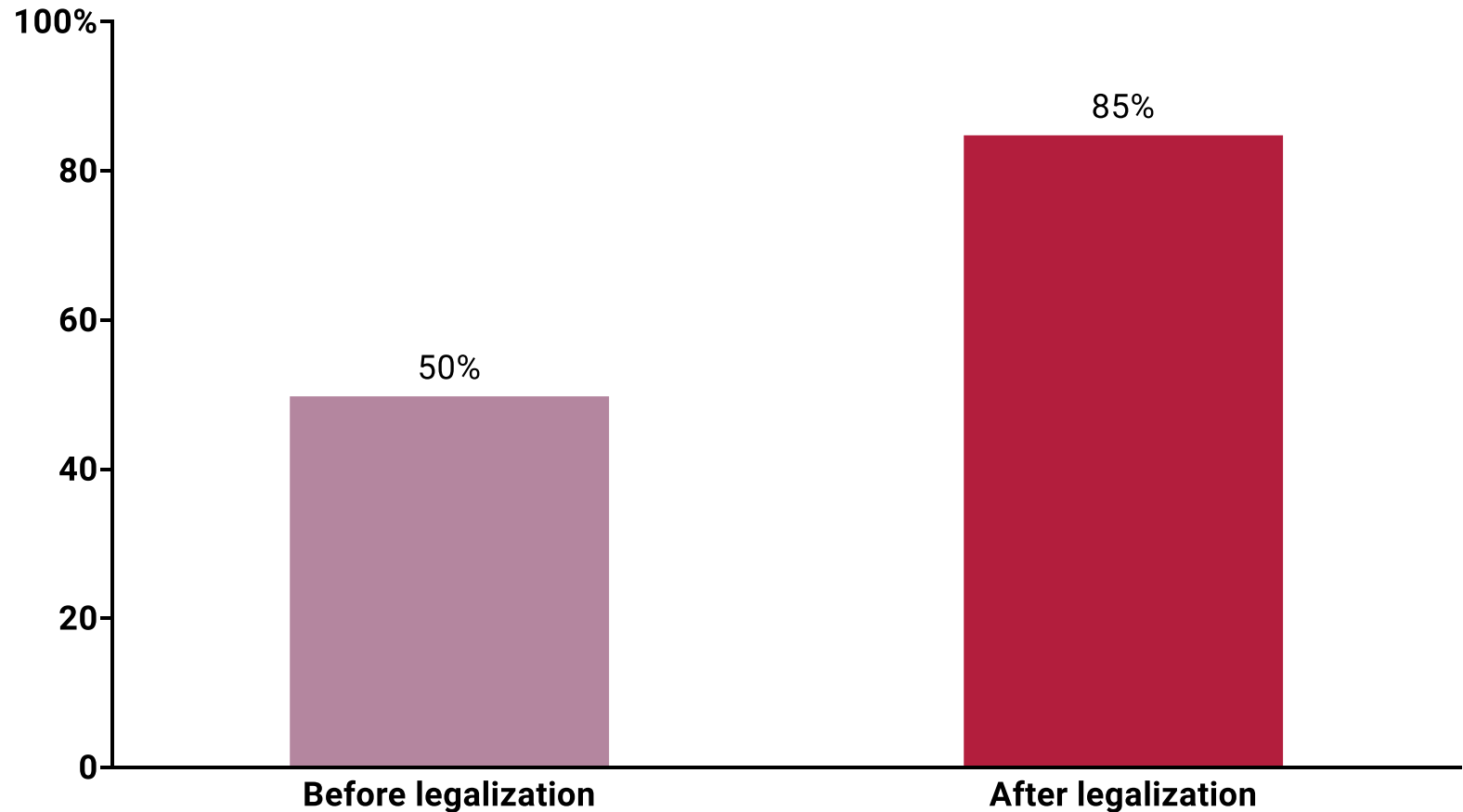
# Pot has had an increasing impact on DWIs in WA post-legalization—1/3 of cases now test positive

Percentage of total DUI/DRE cases testing positive for THC\* in Washington state



# Recent marijuana users now account for 85% of all fatal accidents in Washington state

% of drivers involved in fatal crashes whose blood tests indicated recent marijuana use



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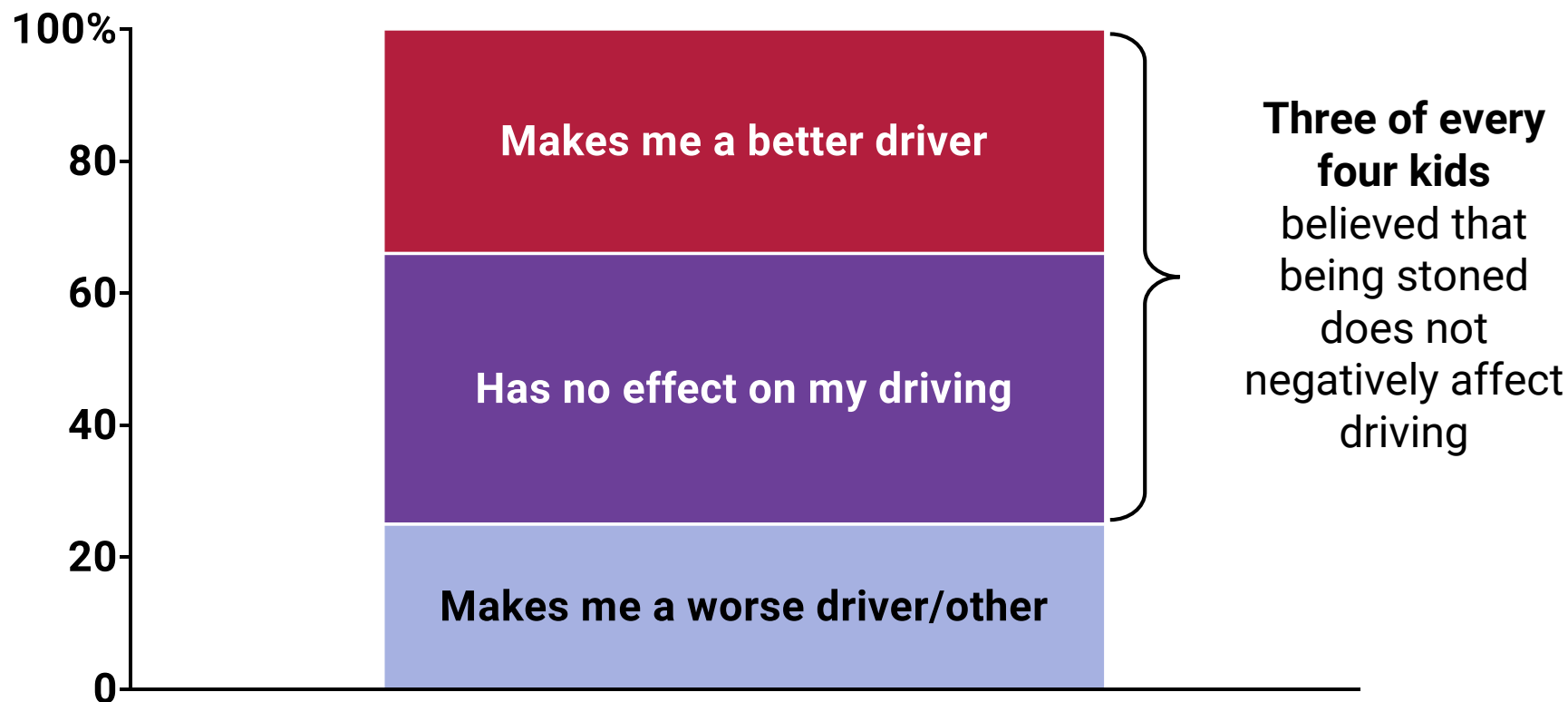
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# False opinions about marijuana are common— “being stoned makes me a better driver”

Poll of >1,700 high school juniors and seniors on driving while high:

*Being stoned...*



# Certain habits and attitudes surrounding pot use to watch for

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- Use of edibles and other **marijuana products attractive to children**
- Use of “dabs” and **other products requiring blowtorches/open flames**
- **Parental perspectives on the harm of marijuana** (“marijuana makes you a better driver”)
- **Driving after marijuana use** (remember that today’s high-potency marijuana can impair for long periods)



Want to learn more?

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