



Powered by the Colorado School of Public Health

## 2024–25 End-of-Year Report



## Summary

The Tea on THC campaign increased public awareness and engagement around the risks of high-concentration cannabis use—particularly among youth, pregnant women, and parents/mentors. Initium Health and the Colorado School of Public Health (ColoradoSPH) combined evidence-based messaging with innovative outreach strategies to drive measurable impact across the state. Campaign activities included a blend of traditional and nontraditional media placements, earned media coverage, community engagement events, out-of-home advertising, outreach strategies, targeted survey sampling, and the creation of culturally relevant content. The campaign raised awareness by exceeding KPIs: It generated over 36 million impressions across media channels, surpassed 20,000 monthly website visitors, exceeded survey sampling goals, and established several community partnerships.

## Introduction to Organization

Initium Health is a public benefit corporation (PBC) founded in Denver, Colorado, with a mission to improve human health and a focus on educational and awareness campaigns across the country. Initium Health was selected from a national, open RFP process. Initium Health demonstrated leadership in public health and behavioral health campaigns using strategy and strong creativity from their prior experience delivering statewide education initiatives. Their deep understanding of behavioral health and data-driven media strategies made them uniquely suited to lead this campaign.

## Campaign Objectives

- Raise awareness of high-concentration cannabis (HCC) and its impacts on health and mental health, especially among youth and pregnant or parenting individuals.
- Equip parents, caregivers, and mentors with tools and messaging to help them have informed, supportive conversations about HCC.
- Support the development of healthy coping skills and encourage the adoption of positive strategies to reduce stress and achieve life goals.



## Population Insights & Rationale for Target Audiences

To address the complex issue of cannabis use in Colorado, our prevention campaign was developed with a dual-focus strategy that engages:

- **Populations most vulnerable to cannabis-related harms:** Youth, young adults, and pregnant and breastfeeding women.
- **Influential figures best positioned to guide positive behavior:** Parents, family members, caregivers and educators.

Our approach was evidence-driven, as identified by 2023 state data:

- **Caucasian residents** (66.1% of pop.; Colorado Department of Local Affairs, 2023) report high rates of both youth (19.4%; Reed, 2021) and adult cannabis use (17.4%; Crawford et al., 2021).
- **Black/African American residents** (4.2% of pop.; Colorado Department of Local Affairs, 2023) report high youth use (20.2%) (Reed, 2021) and the state's highest adult use (17.9%; Crawford et al., 2021).
- **Hispanic/Latino residents** (22.8% of pop.; Colorado Department of Local Affairs, 2023) experience the highest rate of youth cannabis use at 23.2% (Reed, 2021) but the lowest adult use (13.3%; Crawford et al., 2021).

These statistics revealed an urgent priority. Youth cannabis use outpaces adult use across demographics. This fact directly informed our development of a culturally responsive, bilingual campaign. By focusing on community-rooted prevention, our campaign directly addresses these differences and works to ensure equitable access to cannabis education and support across Colorado.

## Target Audience

**Youth (ages 12–26):** Adolescents and emerging adults are at heightened risk for cognitive, emotional, and developmental impacts from high-concentration cannabis use, particularly during neurodevelopmental windows.

- Campaign emphasized middle and high school-aged youth in counties with elevated use rates.

**Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women:** Many women continue cannabis use during pregnancy due to misperceptions around safety, self-medication for anxiety or nausea, and lack of guidance from providers.

- Campaign materials provided information on potential prenatal and neonatal effects.

**Parents, Caregivers, and Trusted Adults:** Adults who influence youth decision-making, especially in multilingual, multigenerational households.

- These individuals were equipped with tools to initiate open conversations, recognize signs of risky use, and reinforce positive protective factors.

### Sources:

- Colorado Department of Local Affairs, State Demography Office. (2023). *Race/ethnicity by single year of age*. <https://demography.dola.colorado.gov/>
- Crawford, K. A., Gardner, J. A., Meyer, E. A., Hall, K. E., Gary, D. S., & Esser, M. B. (2021, October 28). *Current marijuana use and alcohol consumption among adults following the legalization of nonmedical retail marijuana sales - Colorado, 2015–2019*. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7043a3.htm>
- Reed, J. K. (2021). *Impacts of marijuana legalization in Colorado*. Colorado Division of Criminal Justice. [cdpsdocs.state.co.us/ors/docs/reports/2021\\_SB13-283\\_Rpt.pdf](https://cdpsdocs.state.co.us/ors/docs/reports/2021_SB13-283_Rpt.pdf)

## Content Development

The Tea on THC campaign was created to build trust and shift attitudes through relatable storytelling, creative media, and evidence-based education. Grounded in the Health Belief Model and Social Norms Theory, the campaign prioritized open, judgment-free dialogue and promoted practical coping strategies. Messaging was informed by scientific research, national best practices (e.g., *Preventing Marijuana Use Among Youth* by SAMHSA), and community feedback gathered through focus groups with Hispanic youth and other priority populations.

The Tea on THC campaign is grounded in community connection, cultural authenticity, and respectful dialogue. Every element was shaped to reflect the real identities and lived experiences of Colorado's youth and families—across both English and Spanish-speaking communities. Highlights of this approach include:

- Partnering with youth and parents through bilingual focus groups to shape tone, topics, and visuals that felt familiar and trustworthy.
- Designing campaign materials that reflect diverse identities, using inclusive imagery and storylines that avoid stereotypes.
- Producing all content in both English and Spanish, ensuring cultural context and meaning were preserved—not just translated.
- Acknowledging that some communities use cannabis to cope with stress or trauma, and offering nonjudgmental messages focused on support and self-awareness.
- Involving youth directly in message development and testing, to ensure the campaign felt authentic, respectful, informed by the intended audience.

Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2021). *Preventing marijuana use among youth*. <https://library.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/pep21-06-01-001.pdf>

## Real People & Real Stories

In 2024, we conducted a three-day photo shoot to capture campaign visuals that reflected real people, diverse communities, and moments of resilience. These assets became the foundation for our digital content, printed materials, and website imagery—helping to humanize the message and reflect the lived experiences of our audiences.



## Testimonials

As part of the campaign's content strategy, we produced a series of short-form documentaries designed to bring real stories to the forefront and emotionally connect with our audience. Each film was strategically developed to represent a different perspective within the cannabis conversation, grounding our educational message in lived experience, community leadership, and recovery.



## ***The Breaking Point: A Life Lost to THC***

*The Breaking Point: A Life Lost to THC* aligns with the theme of addiction and recovery by addressing the dangers of substance use, specifically high-concentration cannabis, and its devastating impact on mental health. This documentary chronicles the tragic story of Laura's son Johnny Stark, of Castle Rock, Colorado, whose early cannabis use at age 14 led to psychosis and ultimately suicide at age 19. Johnny's story underscores the often-overlooked risks of high-potency cannabis, particularly among young people whose brains are still developing.

# ***Devastating: Students Describe the Chaos of High-Concentration Cannabis Use***

This film offers an intimate look into the lives of students recovering from cannabis use disorder at 5280 High School, Denver's only recovery-focused high school and one of the largest recovery schools in the nation. Told through the voices of these young people in recovery, the film takes viewers inside this unique school, designed for students who have struggled with cannabis addiction. It follows their journey to health, using alternative coping strategies to overcome the challenges of addiction.

The documentary highlights the severe physical and mental health risks associated with high-concentration cannabis use, such as psychosis, mania, and other detrimental effects, including legal and financial consequences. With cannabis products now containing much higher levels of THC than those from a decade ago, the film sheds light on the growing issue of underage use in Colorado.



# ***Former NFL Receiver Brandon Lloyd Catches Good Health After Dropping Cannabis***

This film follows former Denver Bronco Brandon Lloyd as he opens up about his battle with cannabis use disorder. The film highlights his struggles using high-concentration cannabis as a coping mechanism during stressful times in his career and his journey to recovery through healthier coping alternatives like fitness, community support, and mental resilience.



## Podcast Series

We produced five podcast episodes exploring high-concentration cannabis through personal, professional, and scientific perspectives. Each episode served a strategic purpose: to educate, build trust, or elevate underrepresented voices. The podcast strategy was essential in connecting public messaging to academic research. University of Colorado researchers formed a Scientific Review Committee (SRC) which reviewed more than 66,000 studies and guided The Tea on THC on creating content and identifying credible experts to feature. Hearing directly from researchers and providers helped build confidence in the campaign's science-backed messaging. The podcast series expanded the campaign's reach across formats—meeting audiences who prefer to listen, watch, or engage on social media.



### **Brandon Lloyd, MBA**

Brandon Lloyd discusses his NFL career and journey to overcome high-concentration cannabis addiction, highlighting challenges, coping strategies, and a healthier life.



### **Dr. Annie Collier**

Annie Collier, PhD, MS, Associate Professor, ColoradoSPH, blends art and science in cannabis education, promoting positive coping mechanisms and meaningful community conversations.



### **Dr. Gregory Tung**

Greg Tung, PhD, MS, Associate Professor, ColoradoSPH, highlights the challenges of high-concentration cannabis research and stresses cautious policies to protect youth and pregnant women.



### **Tya Anthony**

Tya Anthony, artist and curator, explores how art bridges science and community to spark dialogue on the impact of high-concentration cannabis.



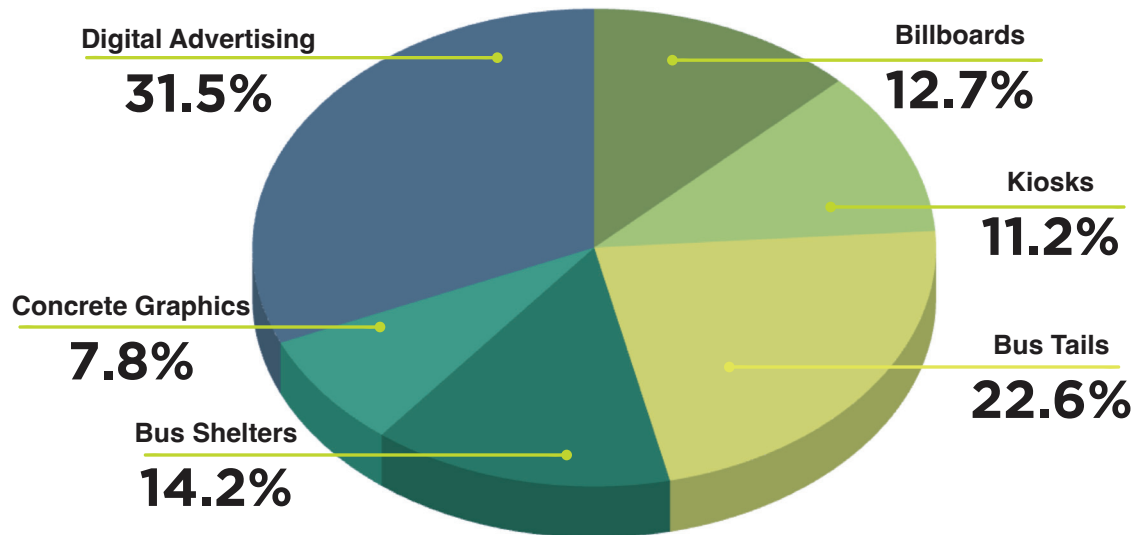
### **Dr. Jon Samet**

Jon Samet, PhD, MS, Associate Professor, ColoradoSPH, discusses cannabis research challenges, public health impacts, and educating on THC risks.

## Awareness Achievements

**36,656,512**  
total impressions

## Impressions by Platform



## Digital Advertising

We used Tiktok, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, as well as display ads and search, for both organic and paid media, prioritizing reach, engagement, and video views. Content was tailored for each platform and audience.

## Billboards

We placed billboards in high-traffic areas within our target regions to reach youth, parents, and pregnant women. Billboards offer strong visibility and repeated exposure, and they reinforce campaign messaging in daily routines.

## Kiosks

We placed ads at digital kiosks at train stations to reach our target audiences during commutes. These high-frequency, eye-level placements drive repeated exposure and reinforce messaging in public spaces that people visit daily.

## Concrete Graphics

Concrete graphics were placed at gas stations, convenience stores, bodegas, and grocery stores, everyday locations. These placements offer high foot traffic and visibility at entry points, and they capture attention during routine errands.

## Bus Shelters

We utilized bus shelter ads in high-traffic areas to reach pedestrians, drivers, and transit riders. Their long dwell time and street-level visibility make them ideal for repeated exposure and message retention.

## Bus Tails

Bus tail ads were placed on the back of buses traveling through initial target regions. These mobile placements maximize visibility on busy roads, reaching drivers and pedestrians across multiple neighborhoods daily.

## Understanding Impressions & Touch Points

The campaign impression goal was rooted in behavioral science and marketing best practices<sup>1</sup>, which emphasize the importance of repeated exposure to messages in order to influence awareness, perception, and behavior.

### Understanding Touchpoints and Audience Reach

- Research shows that it typically takes seven touchpoints for a message to begin to take hold in a consumer's mind.<sup>1</sup>
- However, due to the complexity and sensitivity of cannabis messaging, particularly for high-concentration products and our unique target audiences, we raised that standard.
- We increased the touchpoint benchmark to 10 exposures per individual to account for:
  - Varying levels of message receptivity.
  - The diversity of our audiences.
  - The need for education-driven, trust-building communication.

### Audience-Based Calculation

From the target audience breakdown, we identified a core audience size of approximately 3.5 million Coloradans, including:

- Youth (5–17): 932,379<sup>2</sup>
- Young Adults (18–24): 540,236<sup>3</sup>
- Pregnant Women: 61,494<sup>4</sup>
- Parents & Mentors: 2,048,480<sup>5</sup>

### Using the elevated 10-touchpoint model:

3.5 million individuals × 10 impressions = 35 million total impressions.

### This goal ensured:

- Saturation across varied platforms (paid, organic).
- Sufficient repetition to overcome resistance or inattention.

### Performance Against the Goal

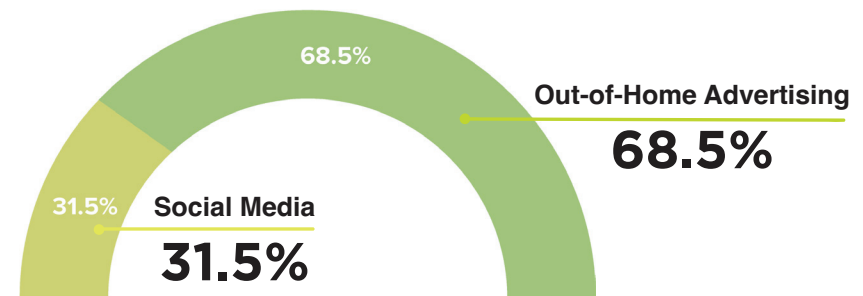
The campaign exceeded the goal:

Target	Performance
<b>35,000,000</b>	<b>36,656,512</b>
Impressions	Impressions

### This includes impressions delivered through:

- Paid social and digital ads.
- Organic content across owned channels.

These figures don't include earned media and website traffic.



Surpassing the 35 million impression goal ensured our messaging was repeated enough times to promote recognition, retention, and action across diverse audiences. By intentionally aiming for 10 touchpoints per person, we created the conditions for long-term engagement.

#### Sources:

1. University of Maryland Baltimore, Communications and Public Affairs. (2025). *Marketing rule of seven*. [www.umaryland.edu/cpa/rule-of-seven/](http://www.umaryland.edu/cpa/rule-of-seven/)
2. Colorado Children's Campaign. (2024a, November). *Child population, by age, by county: Kids count data center*. <https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/tables/11566-child-population-by-age-by-county#detailed/2/any/false/2545/4116,255/22787>
3. Colorado Department of Local Affairs, State Demography Office. (2024). <https://demography.dola.colorado.gov/>
4. U.S. Census Bureau. *Population estimates based on bridged race categories released by the National Center for Health Statistics*. [www.marchofdimes.org/peristats](http://www.marchofdimes.org/peristats)
5. Colorado Children's Campaign. (2024b, December). *Children by family type, by county: Kids Count Data Center*. <https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/tables/3723-children-by-family-type-by-county#detailed/2/any/false/2606,1607,1572,1485,1376/8418,8419,5894/18690,7690>

# Comparative Campaigns & Impact

## Good to Know

The Good to Know Colorado campaign was a public education initiative launched by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) in January 2015. The campaign's primary goal was to inform Colorado adults and visitors about the legal and responsible use of retail marijuana after its legalization in the state.

## Responsibility Grows Here

The Responsibility Grows Here campaign is a public education initiative launched by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) to promote the safe, legal, and responsible use of marijuana in Colorado. The campaign's goal is to ensure that Colorado residents and visitors understand how to use marijuana safely, legally, and responsibly, especially in ways that protect youth and public health.

Metric	Tea on THC	Good to Know	Responsibility Grows Here
Campaign Funding	\$950,000	\$4,168,000	\$10,254,102
Reported Years	1 Year	1 Year	3 years
Campaign Duration	FY 2024–25	FY 2016–17	FY 2018–21
Total Impressions	36,656,512	33,100,000	18,224,902
Click-Through-Rate	3.85%	0.34%	1.73%
Digital Ad Impressions	11,553,333	11,300,000	11,000,000

Sources:

- Maffey, A., Neuwirth, J., Dunn, T., & Crawford, K. (2018). *Retail marijuana education program 2017 annual report*. Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. <https://spl.cde.state.co.us/artemis/heserials/he1910014internet/he19100142017internet.pdf>
- Amélie Company. (n.d.). Responsibility grows here. Amélie. <https://www.ameliecompany.com/work/we-added-responsibility-to-marijuana-consumption>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau. (2021). *State action plan - women/maternal health - annual report - Colorado - 2021*. <https://mchb.tvisdata.hrsa.gov/Narratives/AnnualReport1/ee969843-c960-4eec-b182-0662d3733f13>



## Earned Media Goals vs. Achieved



When we launched the campaign we worked with trusted and widely consumed media outlets like KOA Colorado, Colorado Public Radio, The Denver Gazette, The Colorado Sun, and CBS Colorado to disseminate the work across vast and varied audiences.

Our team developed tailored media concepts for each outlet, aligned with campaign milestones such as two gallery openings and a press conference. We paired these with high-quality press materials, coordinated interviews with credible spokespeople, and ensured reporters and their teams had early access to assets and talking points that made the story easy to cover.

As a result of this proactive and relationship-driven approach, we secured coverage in all five of our original priority outlets, but we also exceeded our media placement goals by earning features in *MG Magazine*, *MSN*, and *9News*, broadening our statewide and national visibility.

## Website Traffic Goals and Actual Results

We set our website traffic goal at 15,000 monthly users post-ramp-up, using benchmarks from similar public health campaigns. To set a realistic yet ambitious target, we conducted a competitive analysis:

Campaign	Monthly Website Visits	Years Running
Truth Initiative	~266,000	26 years
D.A.R.E.	~38,000	42 years
The Tea on THC	~20,123	1 year
YouCanWA	~8,490	4 years
Know This About Cannabis	~3,140	5 years
Wasted on Weed	~545	3 years

Source: Similarweb. (2025, May). Traffic & Engagement. Website Performance.

### From this research, we found:

- Comparative substance use prevention campaigns typically saw 500–8,000 monthly visitors.
- Our 15k/month goal was ambitious for a new campaign, but reflected expected growth through strong digital strategy.

Launched in 2024, our campaign quickly outpaced existing efforts in cannabis education, including YouCanWA, Know This About Cannabis, and Wasted on Weed. We surpassed 20,000 monthly users through a cross-channel strategy including paid ads, social and organic media, earned media, out-of-home placements, and in-person events.

Content focused on youth, pregnant women, and parents/mentors through a self-study curriculum, influencer stories, and downloadable toolkits. This approach drove repeat visits and made the site a trusted hub. Continuous improvements in search engine optimization (SEO), link placements, and accessibility helped expand reach and sustain growth.

## Engagement Achievements

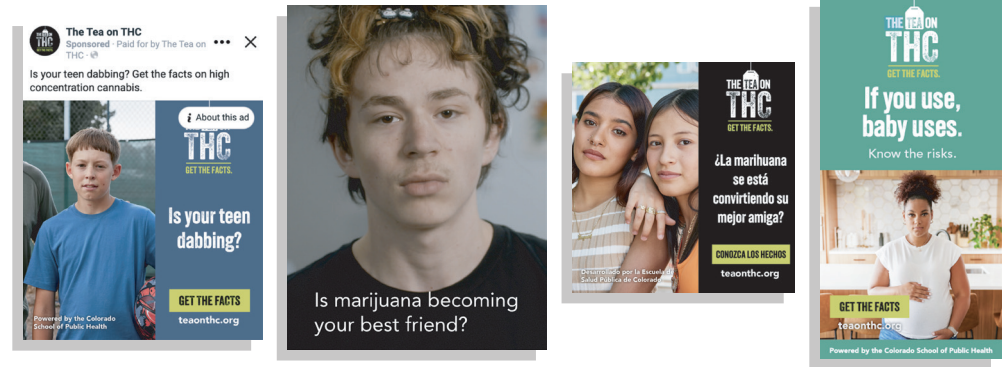
### Click-Through Rate & What It Tell Us

Click-through rate (CTR) is an important metric that measures how often people click on a digital ad after seeing it. It helps determine whether the content is resonating with the target audience. For the Tea on THC, CTR was especially important because it indicated that our public health messaging was not just being seen, but actually driving action and engagement. To evaluate our performance, we looked at industry-standard benchmarks\* across education, health, and wellness sectors for each platform.

For example, Meta's average CTR benchmark is 0.50%, meaning that only half a percent of users typically click on an ad in this space. Campaigns that meet or exceed those benchmarks are considered more effective at reaching and engaging their audiences.

We set our campaign goal to meet or exceed these benchmarks, and through continuous optimization, we've done just that across all channels. In June 2025 alone, we saw:

Platform	Tea on THC CTR	Benchmark
Meta	2.61%	0.50%
Boosted Meta	3.60%	0.50%
Display Ads	13.98%	0.90%
Search	10.19%	3.78%
TikTok	0.36%	0.27%



### Tailoring to TikTok

TikTok posed a unique challenge at first. However, we knew TikTok would be an important touchpoint for youth given how popular the platform is with their age group.

Early on, performance lagged below the benchmark due to overly polished content that didn't match the platform's native tone. By shifting our strategy to emphasize user-generated-style content, feature influencers who aligned with our target audience, and keep videos shorter, less scripted, and more relatable, we were able to optimize content for the platform and exceed the 0.27% benchmark in recent months.

This performance shows that our data-informed, channel-specific approach worked, helping us authentically connect with our audiences across every major digital platform.

We also worked with influencers who reflected the campaign's target audiences, helping us connect more naturally. By tailoring our approach to the platform's culture and tone, we surpassed the benchmark and improved engagement.

\* A benchmark is the average performance standard used to evaluate how well a campaign or content performs on a given platform, such as the typical click-through rate (CTR) for ads on Meta or Google. Meeting or exceeding a benchmark indicates your content is engaging at or above industry norms.

## Community Event Goals vs. Achievements

At the outset, the goal was to host or participate in 10 community events over the course of the our first year.

These events were intended to:

- Reach diverse communities across Colorado.
- Use innovative formats like art, science, and storytelling to shift perceptions, start dialogue, and influence or inform behaviors related to high-concentration cannabis use.
- Engage and educate priority populations, including youth, parents/mentors, pregnant women, and public health stakeholders.

We not only met but exceeded our original goal of 10 events. We implemented 13 total events, adding several high-impact opportunities along the way that significantly expanded campaign reach and visibility.



June 2024  
**Hear/Say Opening Night**

July 2024  
**Hear/Say Scientist Panel**

Oct 2024  
**MGMA Conference**

Dec 2024  
**Press Conference**

Apr 2025  
**Fight the Funk**

May 2025  
**Outside Festival**

June 2025  
**Denver Pride Festival**

June 2024  
**Grow Up Opening Night**  
July 2024  
**Grow Up Closing Event**

Nov 2024  
**CLIO Health Awards**

Mar 2025  
**DC Briefing on Cannabis**

May 2025  
**Women's Health Summit**

June 2025  
**Pikes Peak Pride Festival**

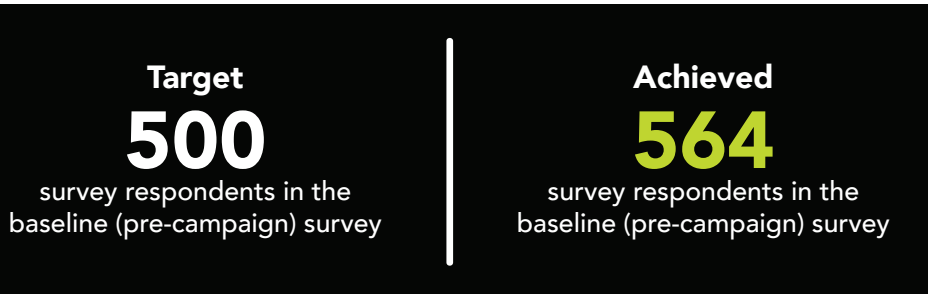
### Each event included:

- Educational materials and branded giveaways
- In-person qualitative dialogue with attendees
- Survey distribution (when applicable)
- QR codes linking to [teaonthc.org](https://teaonthc.org) and the curriculum

## Impact Achievements

To help the ColoradoSPH measure changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to high-concentration cannabis, we facilitated recruitment for the “HB1317 Master Survey.”

The recruitment criteria specified by the ColoradoSPH’s research team set a target of 500 individuals from Colorado, meeting additional demographic quotas to ensure the sample was representative of the general population and comparisons amongst target populations could be made.



An additional survey was fielded in May and June 2025, with a sample size exceeding 500 respondents.

The original baseline survey exceeded the original target number of responses due to the relationship Initium Health maintained and managed with Cint, a research panel firm. The additional survey was also possible due to this relationship, as well as social media retargeting campaigns that Initium Health ran to augment the panel-recruited populations.

The poster is for 'THE TEA ON THC' and features a collage of images: a young man looking at a phone, a young woman, two young women, and a man. The main headline reads 'Some get high. Some get lost. THC can increase psychosis risk.' Below this, it says 'Cannabis & you' and 'Here's a rundown'. A list of risks is provided: 'Short-term use is associated with: Cognitive impairment, memory problems, lower academic achievement, increased drops in memory and concentration, Increased car accidents, Worsening of underlying mental conditions such as mood changes, thinking, and increased risk of acute vomiting.' The poster also states 'There is no known "safe" dose. THC is secreted into breast milk, reaching your baby.' and 'The prevalence of cannabis use during pregnancy'. A 'Myth vs Fact' table is included, followed by the slogan 'KNOW THE RISKS.' and the website 'teaonthc.org'. A QR code is at the bottom right.

**THE TEA ON THC**  
GET THE FACTS.

**Some get high. Some get lost.**  
THC can increase psychosis risk.

**Cannabis & you**  
From memory gaps to uncontrollable symptoms associated with early onset psychosis.

**Here's a rundown**  
**Short-term use is associated with:**

- Cognitive impairment, memory problems, lower academic achievement, increased drops in memory and concentration
- Increased car accidents
- Worsening of underlying mental conditions such as mood changes, thinking, and increased risk of acute vomiting

**teaonthc.org**  
Powered by the Colorado School of Public Health

**There is no known "safe" dose.**  
THC is secreted into breast milk, reaching your baby.


**The prevalence of cannabis use during pregnancy**  
Researchers are finding that THC is increasingly being used during pregnancy across all age groups, with rates particularly high among younger, urban, and socioeconomically disadvantaged people. National surveys indicate a doubling in reported cannabis use among pregnant women from 2002 to 2017, with usage rates ranging from 2% to 5% overall, and skyrocketing to 15% or even 28% in certain demographics. Study after study reveals a persistent rise in cannabis consumption during pregnancy.


Myth	Fact
✗ Cannabis is safer and less expensive than tobacco.	✓ For the fetus, cannabis poses risks similar to tobacco.
✗ Cannabis is a safe and effective treatment for morning sickness.	✓ No evidence supports this claim.
✗ There is no risk, or just a slight risk, to using cannabis only once or twice a week during pregnancy.	✓ Researchers already know that THC poses risks to fetal development, including to the nervous system. Research is still being conducted, but cannabis experts don't think there is any "safe" dose during pregnancy.

**KNOW THE RISKS.**  
**teaonthc.org**  
Powered by the Colorado School of Public Health

Scan the QR code or visit [teaonthc.org/pregnant-people](https://teaonthc.org/pregnant-people) to learn more.

# Printed Collateral





## Some get high. Some get lost.

THC can increase psychosis risk.

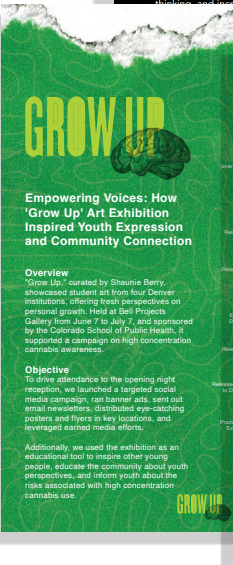
### Cannabis & youth: physical and mental health risks

From memory gaps to uncontrollable vomiting to increased risk of schizophrenia, the list of symptoms associated with early use of high concentration cannabis makes for disturbing reading.

#### Here's a rundown of what researchers have observed.

Short-term use is associated with:	Long-term use is associated with:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cognitive impairment, memory and learning problems, lower academic achievement, increased dropout risk</li> <li>Memory and concentration problems</li> <li>Increased car accidents</li> <li>Worsening of underlying mental health conditions such as mood changes, suicidal thinking, and increased risk of psychosis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cannabis use disorder</li> <li>Breathing problems, same as from smoking tobacco</li> <li>Decreased motivation or interest in academics or work</li> <li>Increased risk for schizophrenia, depression, anxiety, anger, irritability, moodiness, suicide</li> <li>Reduced intellectual functioning, poor educational and psychosocial outcomes</li> </ul>

...ent neurocognitive impairment, even after cessation, especially if use began before age 17



## Empowering Voices: How 'Grow Up' Art Exhibition Inspired Youth Expression and Community Connection

### Overview

'Grow Up' curated by Shantae Berry showcased student art from four Denver institutions, offering their perspectives on personal growth. Held at Fuel Projects Gallery from June 7 to July 7, and sponsored by the Colorado School of Public Health, it supported a campaign on high concentration cannabis awareness.

### Objective

To drive attendance to the opening night reception, we launched a targeted social media campaign, ran banner ads, sent out email newsletters, distributed eye-catching posters and flyers in key locations, and leveraged earned media efforts.

Additionally, we used the exhibition as an educational tool to inspire other young people, educate the community about youth perspectives, and inform youth about the risks associated with high concentration cannabis use.

## HEAR/SAY

### Empowering Conversations: How the Hear/Say Art Exhibition Transformed Perspectives on High Concentration Cannabis

#### Overview

'Hear/Say' curated by Ty Anthony, featured innovative works by 11 artists exploring the science and impact of high concentration cannabis. Held at BRDG Gallery from June 14 to July 14, and sponsored by the Colorado School of Public Health, it aimed to spark critical conversations and raise awareness about cannabis use through art.

#### Objective

To drive attendance to the Hear/Say opening night reception, we launched a targeted social media campaign, ran banner ads, sent out email newsletters, distributed eye-catching posters and flyers in key locations, and leveraged earned media efforts.

Additionally, the exhibition served as an educational tool to inspire other artists, educate the community about high-concentration cannabis, and inform the public about the scientific and social implications of its use.

#### Media Timeline

- Website Finished May 10, 2024
- Denver Media PRP May 2, 2024
- Released press release to over 500 Denver media outlets
- Mailbox Posters May 20, 2024
- Released posters to mailboxes near to Denver residents
- DARPA June 3, 2024
- Released creative to community about awareness
- Inforum Health June 10, 2024
- Enriched event promotion to reach to Denver area art professionals
- Westword June 10, 2024
- Released event promotion to reach to Denver area art professionals
- Westword June 10, 2024
- Released event promotion to reach to Denver area art professionals
- 1280 Magazine June 21, 2024
- Published story on both art exhibitions featuring Ty Anthony and a few artists





## Is your teen dabbing?

A third of teen cannabis users are using high concentration dabs.


### Understanding youth & cannabis

As cannabis becomes more popular and widely legal for those 21 and over, concerning information about its effects have emerged, particularly for young people aged 11 to 21. People are often first exposed to cannabis as teens (11–13) and young adults (14–21), and prevention efforts are critical up to age 25. Clear communication about cannabis risks are complicated by a lack of evidence, especially for high concentration products.


Prevalence of cannabis use	Youth's perceptions toward cannabis
<p>Cannabis use among youth aged 11–14 is a significant concern due to its adverse effects on physical, mental, and cognitive development, especially with high concentration products. Prevalence varies by location and is influenced by local policies, availability, and cultural attitudes. Early cannabis use is discouraged because of its negative health consequences. Laws on cannabis use differ by state, so it's important to follow local regulations. Prevention efforts include education, community programs, and parental involvement, making it a public health priority to reduce youth cannabis use.</p>	<p>Attitudes about the risk of using a substance can influence how much it is actually used. Young people view cannabis as less risky than other drugs, including alcohol and tobacco. Over the past decade, perceived risk for cannabis has declined due to legalization, yet youth use has remained stable. Educating youth about cannabis risks is essential to keep use rates stable or reduce them as legalization spreads in the U.S.</p>




Scan the QR code or visit [teaonthc.org/parents-and-mentors](https://teaonthc.org/parents-and-mentors) to learn more.




## "The Breaking Point: A Life Lost to THC"



## "Devastating: Students Describe the Chaos of High Concentration Cannabis Use"






## Is marijuana becoming your best friend?

### Cannabis & youth: physical and mental health risks

From memory gaps to uncontrollable vomiting to increased risk of schizophrenia, the list of symptoms associated with early use of high concentration cannabis makes for disturbing reading.

#### Here's a rundown of what researchers have observed.

Short-term use is associated with:	Long-term use is associated with:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cognitive impairment, memory and learning problems, lower academic achievement, increased dropout risk</li> <li>Memory and concentration problems</li> <li>Increased car accidents</li> <li>Worsening of underlying mental health conditions such as mood changes, suicidal thinking, and increased risk of psychosis</li> <li>Acute vomiting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cannabis use disorder</li> <li>Breathing problems, same as from smoking tobacco</li> <li>Decreased motivation or interest in academics or work</li> <li>Increased risk for schizophrenia, depression, anxiety, anger, irritability, moodiness, suicide</li> <li>Reduced intellectual functioning, poor educational and psychosocial outcomes</li> <li>Persistent neurocognitive impairment, even after cessation, especially if use began before age 17</li> </ul>



Scan the QR code or visit [teaonthc.org/youth](https://teaonthc.org/youth) to learn more.



## "Former NFL Receiver Brandon Lloyd Catches Good Health After Dropping Cannabis"

## Conclusion

The Tea on THC campaign, launched in 2024 by the Colorado School of Public Health and Initium Health, set out to address the growing risks of high-concentration cannabis use with a bold, evidence-informed, and culturally grounded public health strategy. Over the course of one year, the campaign reached millions across Colorado through compelling content, trusted voices, and community-rooted events. By aligning science, storytelling, and strategic outreach, the campaign exceeded expectations and laid the groundwork for sustainable impact in Year 2 and beyond.

## Summary of Achievements

**Exceeded Awareness Goal:** Generated 36.6 million total impressions, surpassing the 35 million goal through paid media, organic content, and out-of-home advertising.

**High Website Engagement:** Surpassed the 15,000 monthly user goal, achieving 20,000+ users/month, outperforming legacy campaigns like YouCanWA and Know This About Cannabis.

**Strong Digital Performance:** Greatly outperformed industry click-through benchmarks across every platform (e.g., Meta CTR: 2.61% vs. 0.50% benchmark; Display Ads: 13.98% vs. 0.90%).

**Earned Media Coverage:** Secured placements in all five priority outlets (e.g., KOA, CPR, Denver Gazette), and expanded reach through MG Magazine, MSN, and 9News.

**Events and Community Engagement:** Hosted or participated in 13 campaign events, including Denver Pride, art exhibitions, national briefings, and school-based activations.

**Content Production:** Conducted comprehensive photo and video shoots which resulted in 3 documentaries, 5 podcast episodes, and numerous social media clips, featuring real stories from youth, parents, and individuals with lived experience.

**Toolkits and Curriculum:** Developed prevention toolkits and launched a web-based curriculum for use across schools, community organizations, and families.

**Successful Evaluation:** Collected 564 baseline survey responses, exceeding the goal of 500, plus conducted a second survey with 500+ additional responses.

# THE TEA ON THC

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**public health**

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