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More Colorado Students Bringing Marijuana to School, Anecdotal Reports Suggest

School officials, counselors and nurses in Colorado say they are seeing an increase in the number of students bringing marijuana to school, according to *The Denver Post*.

The rise has taken place since the state regulated medical marijuana in 2010 and legalized recreational marijuana last year.

Colorado's marijuana laws forbid anyone under age 21 from using marijuana.

Mike Dillon, a school resource officer with the Mesa County Sheriff's Department, said he is seeing a growing number of younger students bringing marijuana to school. "When we have middle school kids show up with a half an ounce, that is shocking to me," he told the newspaper.

While school disciplinary statistics in the state do not isolate marijuana from general drug violations, anecdotal reports suggest an increase in marijuana-related incidents in middle schools and high schools around the state.

"We have seen a sharp rise in drug-related disciplinary actions which, anecdotally, from credible sources, is being attributed to the changing social norms surrounding marijuana," said Janelle Krueger, the program manager for Expelled and At-Risk Student Services for the Colorado Department of Education. She said school officials think the increase is linked to the message that legalization sends to children that marijuana is a medicine, and is a safe and accepted recreational activity. It is also believed to be more available, she adds. Parents or other adults may be less likely to hide marijuana now that it is legal, making it easier for students to obtain.

Last year, a report about 720 student expulsions from public schools in Colorado found marijuana accounted for 32 percent of cases—more than any other drug.

Christine Harms, Director of the Colorado School Safety Resource Center, said federal grants for drug abuse prevention have been cut, making it more difficult to counteract the message that legalization is sending to young people.

Click here to read NCADD's *Addiction Medicine : Marijuana – A Country Divided*.