

Guidance Document for Using the Terminology *Marijuana* or *Cannabis*

Definitions

Federal Level

According to the NIH National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, the word cannabis refers to all products derived from the plant *Cannabis sativa*. The cannabis plant contains more than 80 biologically active chemical compounds, the two most commonly known compounds being delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD). Marijuana refers to parts of or products from the *Cannabis sativa* plant that contain substantial amounts of THC.

State Level

The Montana State Legislature defines marijuana as “all plant material from the genus Cannabis containing tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) or seeds of the genus capable of germination”. There is no definition for cannabis outlined in the Montana Code.

Recommendations

The term cannabis can be used for all products derived from the plant *Cannabis sativa*, regardless of whether they do or do not contain THC. However, in order to increase clarification and follow the guidelines of the Montana Code, DPHHS employees should typically use the term marijuana when referring to products containing THC. The table on the following page, created by the Washington Healthy Youth Coalition, provides more specific guidance on what terminology to use depending on the target audience being addressed.

Disclaimer

This document is a tool for prevention partners to utilize when in doubt about which term to use. The intention is to bring consistency across prevention messaging in the state of Montana. Language is dynamic and changes over time. These recommendations were developed by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services to reflect our current knowledge, expertise, and community needs. The recommendations in this document are subject to change as new information becomes available.

Considerations for Using the Terminology *Cannabis* or *Marijuana*

Audience	Term	Considerations
Youth (12-17)	Marijuana	In audience research, youth have not identified one slang term that is universally known. Although not all teens use the term marijuana, it is generally well understood. This term is also mostly used by clinicians and prevention experts, which lends an element of credibility to messages.
Young adults (18-20)	Marijuana	In audience research, young adults have not identified one slang term that is universally known. Although few young adults use the term marijuana, it is well understood across the entire audience.
Parents and influential adults	Marijuana	In audience research and from a general understanding from parents in the field, not all parents or influential adults understand the term cannabis or most slang terms. Marijuana seems to be well understood across the adult population.
Adult consumers (21+)	Cannabis	Although the term marijuana is widely understood across adult consumers, audience research and collaboration with industry has identified that many consumers do not respond positively to messaging that does not use the term cannabis.
Medical marijuana consumers	Cannabis	The term cannabis has a strong association with medical marijuana use and is widely used by this audience.
Prevention field	Marijuana	Typically, when discussing this topic among colleagues, the term marijuana is used most widely.

In Surveys/Data Analysis

It is critically important to be precise with terminology usage when talking about the results of studies or surveys. For example, both the Prevention Needs Assessment (PNA) and the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBS) exclusively use the term marijuana in their surveys, cannabis is never mentioned. When referencing data that has resulted from these surveys, DPHHS employees should exclusively use the term marijuana. Data from other sources should not be compared to the PNA or YRBS unless that source also exclusively uses the term marijuana for its data collection

Recreational vs Adult-Use

With marijuana still being illegal for persons under 21 years of age, there is concern that the term recreational marijuana may give adolescents the wrong idea about who can use marijuana. Adult-use marijuana or retail marijuana are terms that can be used to describe marijuana generally while not appealing to adolescents. However, because neither of those terms distinguish between medical or recreational marijuana, there might be situations where the use of those terms will not be appropriate and extra clarification will be needed.

General Guidance

To avoid confusion and be as inclusive as possible, it is best practice to lead with the appropriate term but also weave in additional terms through the message. For example: Marijuana (also known as cannabis, weed, pot, etc.) can harm the developing brain. Alternating terminology on websites also improves search engine optimization.

State Statutes

The following statutes are provided below to provide more definitions for various marijuana-related products. It is recommended that these definitions are followed in accordance with the Montana Code.

Statute 16-12-102

(1) "Adult-use dispensary" means a licensed premises from which a person licensed by the department may:

(a) obtain marijuana or marijuana products from a licensed cultivator, manufacturer, dispensary, or other licensee approved under this chapter; and

(b) sell marijuana or marijuana products to registered cardholders, adults that are 21 years of age or older, or both.

(20) (a) "Marijuana" means all plant material from the genus *Cannabis* containing tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) or seeds of the genus capable of germination.

(b) The term does not include hemp, including any part of that plant, including the seeds and all derivatives, extracts, cannabinoids, isomers, acids, salts, and salts of isomers, whether growing or not, with a delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol concentration of not more than 0.3% on a dry weight basis, or commodities or products manufactured with hemp, or any other ingredient combined with marijuana to prepare topical or oral administrations, food, drink, or other products.

(22) "Marijuana concentrate" means any type of marijuana product consisting wholly or in part of the resin extracted from any part of the marijuana plant.

(23) "Marijuana derivative" means any mixture or preparation of the dried leaves, flowers, resin, or byproducts of the marijuana plant, including but not limited to marijuana concentrates and other marijuana products.

(24) "Marijuana product" means a product that contains marijuana and is intended for use by a consumer by a means other than smoking. The term includes but is not limited to edible products, ointments, tinctures, marijuana derivatives, and marijuana concentrates.

- (26) "Mature marijuana plant" means a harvestable marijuana plant.
- (38) "Seedling" means a marijuana plant that has no flowers and is less than 12 inches in height and 12 inches in diameter.
- (41) (a) "Usable marijuana" means the dried leaves and flowers of the marijuana plant that are appropriate for the use of marijuana by an individual.
- (b) The term does not include the seeds, stalks, and roots of the plant.

Statute 37-7-101

(16) "Drug" means a substance:

- (a) recognized as a drug in any official compendium or supplement;
- (b) intended for use in diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of disease in humans or animals;
- (c) other than food, intended to affect the structure or function of the body of humans or animals; and
- (d) intended for use as a component of a substance specified in subsection (16)(a), (16)(b), or (16)(c)

Other References

Definitions for cannabis and marijuana were obtained from the National Institute of Health's National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health. The recommendations in this document were influenced by the Washington Healthy Youth Coalition's guidance document titled "Considerations for using the terminology *Cannabis* or *Marijuana*". The research that contributed to the table was conducted by the Washington State Department of Health.