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## Colorado Provides Employers Resource on Marijuana Health Risks

The Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (“CDPHE”) issued a 188-page report entitled, “Monitoring Health Concerns Related to Marijuana in Colorado: 2014.” The report was prepared by a 13-member committee appointed by the CDPHE to review marijuana-related medical literature and conduct hearings of its own. The report is an extensive look at the CDPHE’s findings.

The CDPHE provided the following highlights about current marijuana use in Colorado:

- While past 30-day marijuana use by Colorado youth ages 12–17 is 4% higher than the national average (11% versus the national average of 7%), its use by high-schoolers is 3% lower (20% versus 23%).
- Adult use is higher in Colorado than in most other states.
- “(A)mong those who report using marijuana, more than half (64%) use more than 8 times per month.”

The report also found that marijuana use by pregnant mothers appears to have significant negative consequences for the child, including “decreased academic ability, cognitive function and attention. Importantly, these effects may not appear until adolescence.”

According to the report, marijuana use by children leaves a student “less likely to graduate from high school and more likely to be addicted to marijuana, alcohol, and tobacco in adulthood.” It also increases the risk of “psychotic symptoms or psychotic disorders in adulthood.”

The CDPHE reports impact on a marijuana user’s ability to function for hours after use.

In general, we found that, for occasional (less than weekly) marijuana users, smoking, eating, or drinking marijuana containing 10 milligrams or more of THC is likely to cause impairment that affects the ability to drive, bike, or perform other safety sensitive activities. In addition, for these occasional users, waiting at least six hours after smoking marijuana (containing up to 35 milligrams of THC) will likely allow sufficient time for the impairment to resolve. The waiting time is longer for eating or drinking marijuana products. We found it is necessary for occasional users to wait at least eight hours for impairment to resolve after orally ingesting up to 18 milligrams of THC.

Compounding this, the CDPHE found that some marijuana products may require up to 4 hours to reach peak effect, putting users at risk of heightened health concerns if they use additional marijuana, alcohol or other substances during that period.

And contrary to popular myth, the report confirmed that secondhand marijuana smoke “is unlikely to result in a failed workplace urine test or a failed driving impairment blood test.”

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The CDPHE noted that its report identifies many areas warranting further research. Nonetheless, the report provides readers with insight into the possible effects of marijuana use. As the number of marijuana-permissive laws increases across the country, employers and companies in general—such as hotels—that allow the public to come onto their property will likely find the CDPHE’s extensive investigation of these issues informative.

Headquartered in Denver, with offices throughout the western United States and in Atlantic City and the District of Columbia, Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP assists clients to navigate the growing array of marijuana laws, while maintaining compliance with federal, state and local law. To this end, Brownstein has developed a detailed 50-state survey of the different kinds of marijuana laws currently in effect. These laws vary widely, even with respect to states that allow the medical or recreational use of marijuana. Brownstein will continue to update the survey, and Bill and Matt will continue to monitor changing marijuana laws and will provide periodic updates on significant developments in the area. If you or your company would like assistance with marijuana-related compliance issues, or would like to receive a copy of the 50-state survey and periodic updates, please email Bill Berger at [bberger@bhfs.com](mailto:bberger@bhfs.com) or Matt Arentsen at [marentsen@bhfs.com](mailto:marentsen@bhfs.com).

*This document is intended to provide you with general information regarding evolving marijuana law in Colorado. The contents of this document are not intended to provide specific legal advice. If you have any questions about the contents of this document or if you need legal advice as to an issue, please contact the attorney listed or your regular Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP attorney. This communication may be considered advertising in some jurisdictions.*

**Bill Berger**

Shareholder  
[bberger@bhfs.com](mailto:bberger@bhfs.com)  
303.223.1178

**Matt Arentsen**

Associate  
[marentsen@bhfs.com](mailto:marentsen@bhfs.com)  
303.223.1152