Cannabis Policy and Youth: Key findings from Oregon research

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Key findings about youth risks and cannabis policy

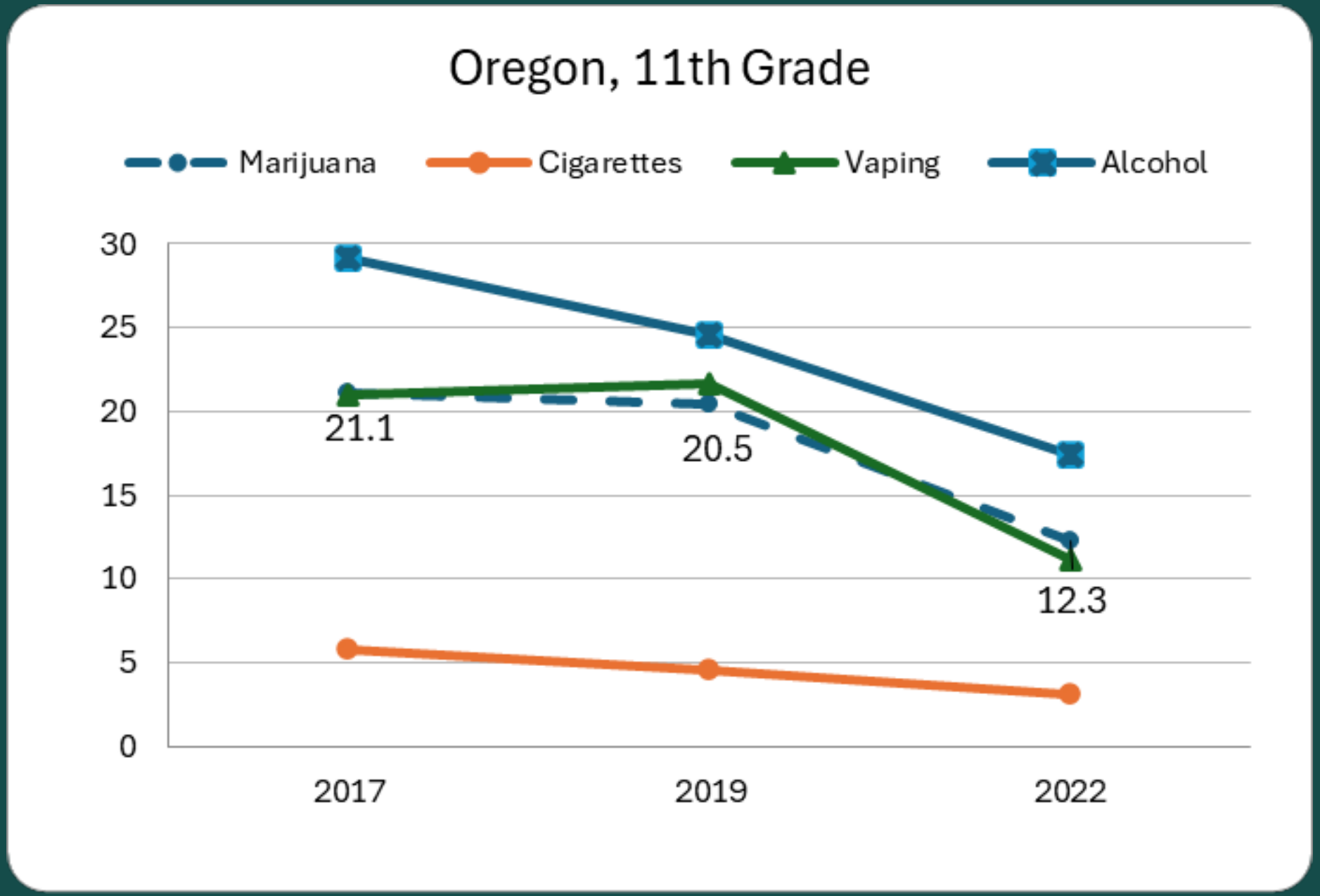
1. Exposure to cannabis retail is associated with significantly greater cannabis-related risk factors among adolescents: multiple “upstream” prevention measures and cannabis use behaviors
2. Pediatric cannabis edible exposures reported to Oregon’s Poison Center increased following a change in the amount of THC per package in cannabis edibles

1. Adolescent cannabis risks

Source: 2 papers in scientific review
data from 2016-2018, 8th and 11th grade
data from 2016-2018-2022, 11th grade

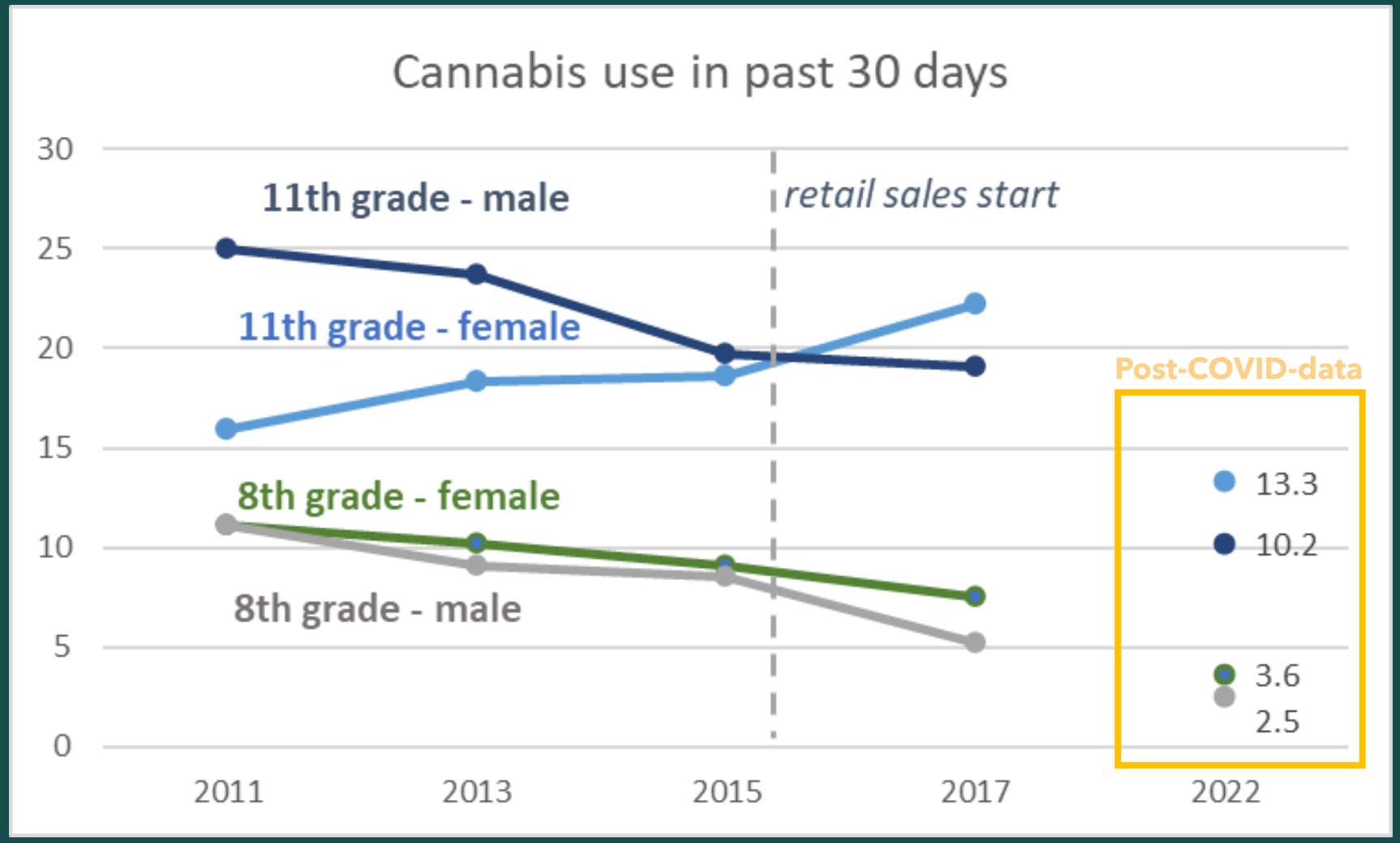
Substance use has generally declined among **youth** in recent years

Figure: % of youth using substance in past 30 days



Source: Oregon Healthy Teens (OHT) survey and Student Health Survey (SHS)

Different patterns emerge for specific populations: such as increases for older females after legalization



All 4 early legal states (OR, WA, CO, AK) showed patterns of increasing use among older females relative to other groups, not seen at the national level

Source: Oregon Healthy Teens Survey (OHT) and Student Health Survey (SHS).

Cannabis retail → cannabis risk for **Youth**

- School-level data linked: student surveys + cannabis retail exposure
- Exposure: distance from school to the nearest 5 retailers, per survey year
- Survey data:
  - 3 norms measures: whether parents, peers, or students themselves think it's wrong to use cannabis
  - 2 measures of risk: from trying, from using regularly
  - 1 measure of perceived access (how "easy" to get cannabis)
  - 2 measures of cannabis use (any in past month, frequent use)

<u>All</u> outcomes examined go in a "worse" direction with increasing school-level exposure to cannabis retail over time

Conclusion: Cannabis retail exposure in communities may affect youth risk factors, protective factors, and use

- "Normalizing" cannabis through storefront visibility and appeal
- Increasing cannabis availability and use among adults/older peers

2. Pediatric cannabis edible exposures

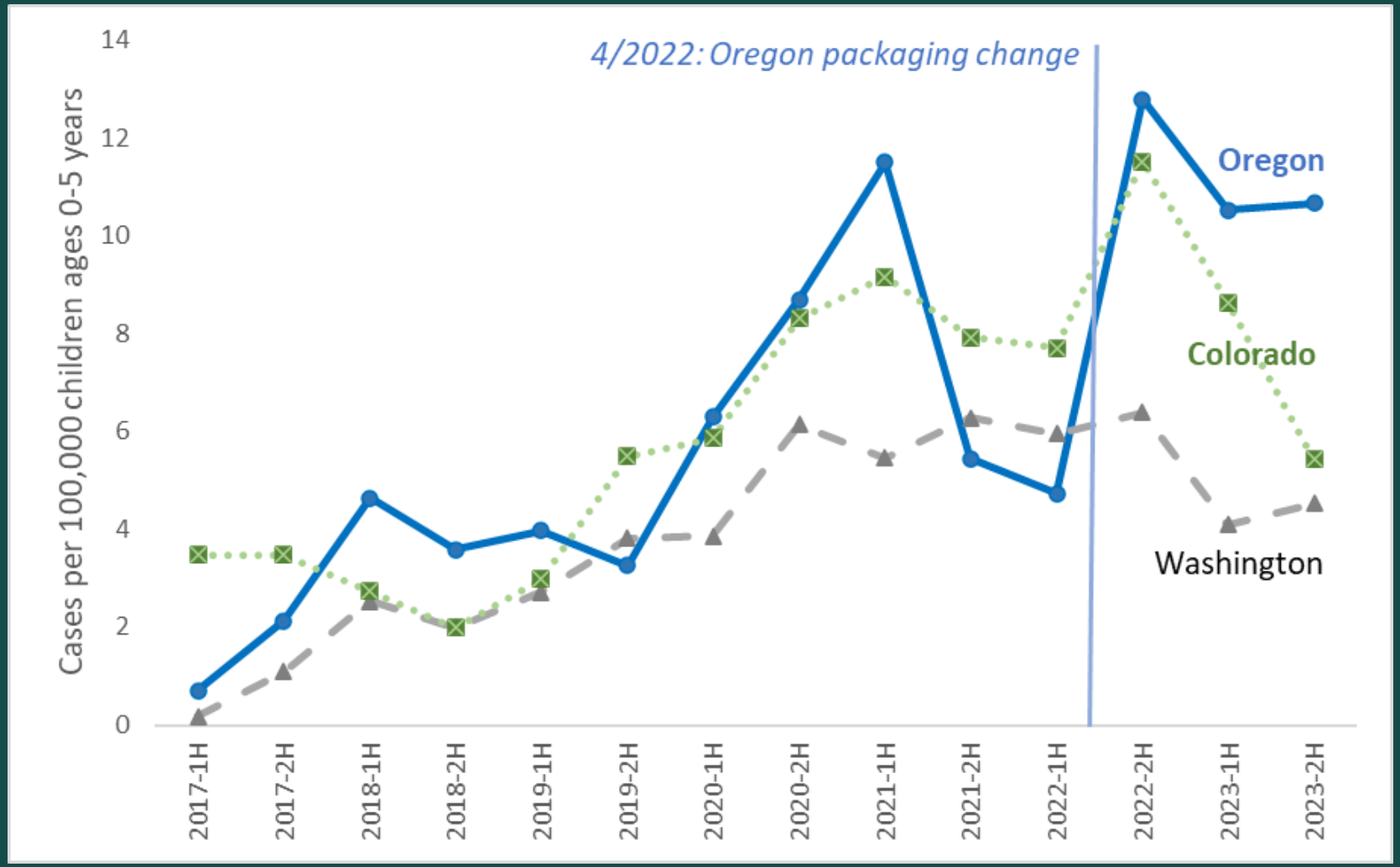
citation: Dilley JA, Hendrickson RG, Everson EM, Jeanne TL. (2024) Monitoring cannabis adverse events: Lessons from edible packaging policies and child poisonings. Am J Public Health. 2024 Nov;114(S8):S631-S634. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2024.307789. PMID: 39442029; PMCID: PMC11499690.

THC in cannabis edible packages increased – so did Poison Center reports of exposures for children 0-5

4/2022: Maximum THC per package increased from 50 mg to 100mg

Pediatric (ages 0-5) reports of cannabis edible exposures:

- Trending upward in all legal states
- **Cases increased in Oregon, when the policy changed**



Source: US Poison Center Data from 3 legal states. Cases limited to those where child likely required medical treatment.
Dilley, Hendrickson, Erickson, Jeanne; 2024 AJPH.

Conclusion: Increased THC amounts per package may increase the severity of child exposures

- Cannabis edible products may appeal to small children: chocolates, cookies, brownies
- Greater THC concentration per package may increase the potential for child THC exposure
- Children 0-5 made up 33% of cannabis-related Oregon Poison Center cases in 2023
- Some child outcomes can be serious: central nervous system depression affecting breathing, heart rate, consciousness

Thank you

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