The Rocky Mountain High Experience

Laura Gillim-Ross PhD, HCLD(ABB)
Laboratory Director
Summary

• History of Marijuana in Colorado
• Role of Health Dept
• Role of the Laboratory
• Lessons learned
History of Marijuana in CO

Nov. 2000  Amendment 20 Medical Marijuana

Nov. 2012  Amendment 64 Retail Marijuana

Dec. 2012  Task force created for implementing amendment 64

Mar. 2013  Task force issues recommendations on regulation and taxes

May 2013  Governor signs bills based on task force recommendations

Sep. 2013  Colorado Dept. of Revenue (CDOR) adopts Colorado Retail Marijuana Code (HB – 13-1317)

Nov. 2013  Vote on Proposition AA, a 15% excise tax plus 10% sales tax

Jan. 2014  Regulations go into effect

Mar. 2014  CDOR rules passed
What did this mean for CDPHE?

– CDOR’s not CDPHE’s but following specific roles for CDPHE:

• "Monitor changes in drug use patterns... and the emerging science and medical information relevant to the health effects associated with marijuana use."

• “...appoint a panel of health care professionals with expertise in cannaboid physiology to monitor the relevant information."
C.R.S. Sec. 24-20-112(3) requires "a state agency” to "work with a private advisory group to develop good laboratory practices for the retail marijuana industry."

C.R.S. Sec. 24-20-112(5) requires "a state agency” to "establish educational materials regarding appropriate retail marijuana use and prevention of marijuana use by those under twenty-one years of age." The Governor's Office is leading, and CDPHE may provide input.

Other potential roles for CDPHE:
History of Marijuana in CO

Other potential roles for CDPHE:

• C.R.S. Sec. 24-33.5-516(2)(k) – CDPHE may be asked to support other agencies in providing "data on emergency room visits related to the use of marijuana and the outcomes of those visits, including information from the Colorado Poison Control Center."

• C.R.S. Sec. 25-14-103.5 amends the Colorado Clean Indoor Air Act to include marijuana. CDPHE will likely play a role similar to the one it plays with tobacco.
Beyond roles outlined in the bills:

- CDPHE also will continue its regular duties to protect the health and safety of the public.

- These duties may intersect with recreational marijuana.
Example: Synthetic Marijuana Outbreak

- Fall 2013 – over 200 Emergency Room Visits related to synthetic marijuana use reported to CDPHE, with at least 10 ICU admissions.
  - Novel compound discovered during investigation.
  - Largest “outbreak” of its kind in US history
- Lessons from synthetic marijuana outbreak may guide efforts to detect contaminated marijuana products.
  - Literature shows marijuana can be contaminated by bacteria, mold, and chemicals like pesticides, lead, and formaldehyde.
- Goal - to quickly remove any contaminated products off the market to protect health of the public.
CDPHE Internal Governance

Recreational Marijuana Steering Committee (internal)*
*Co-chaired by CDPHE’s Deputy CMO and Chief of Toxicology, Environmental/Occupational Epidemiology; with representatives from all divisions on this chart

Internal committee coordinates all of CDPHE’s diverse responsibilities related to recreational marijuana

- Collecting and analyzing data on prevalence of marijuana use
  - Center for Health and Environmental Information and Statistics (CHEIS)
- Clean Indoor Air Act issues; if designated, may do prevention education or campaigns
  - Preventive Services Division (PSD)
- Surveillance for health effects & outbreaks; compile medical lit & safety info
  - Disease Control and Environmental Epidemiology Division (DCEED)
- Consultative role on developing lab regs; lab certification
  - Laboratory Services Division (LSD)
- Consultative role on issues related to the safety of edibles
  - Division of Environmental Health & Sustainability (DEHS)
- Consultative role on issues related to marijuana disposal
  - Hazardous Waste and Waste Management Division (HWWMD)

Population Health and Recreational Marijuana Advisory Committee (set up in Senate Bill 283)
Retail Marijuana and the Lab:

New Lab Director

DEA?
Reference lab?
certification?

PT?
$$$

Testing?
Federal funding at risk?
Certification of Retail Marijuana Testing Facilities (RMTF):

- Apr. 4, 2014: CDPHE agrees to serve as inspectors
- Apr. 21: Inspection request and checklist provided to RMTF
- Apr. 24-30: Four RMTF inspected
- May 1: CDOR grants provisional certification

ISSUES: Proficiency testing and Reference lab
## Recommendations for Testing Requirements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contaminant</th>
<th>Acceptable Limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Escherichia coli</td>
<td>Negative-None detected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salmonella species</td>
<td>Negative-None detected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bile tolerant gram negative bacteria</td>
<td>Max Limit: 10,000 CFU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspergillus sp.</td>
<td>Negative-None detected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mucor sp.</td>
<td>Negative-None detected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Presence of nucleic acid does not equal live organism
- *E. coli* and molds ubiquitous
- Molds public health importance in immunocompetent?
- Risk-based testing
Registry of DUI/DUID Test Results:

- Guide education efforts
- Guide testing targets
- Guide law enforcement
- Local, state and National
Roadside Drug Testing Instruments:

- No National “approved” list
Lessons Learned:

• Don’t wait, get involved
• Work with other Divisions within your agency and state
• Reach out to other states.
• Enjoy the ride.
• Marijuana can be put in anything!
Summary

• History of Marijuana in Colorado
• Role of Health Dept
• Role of the Laboratory
• Lessons learned
Thank you!

laura.gillim-ross@state.co.u