

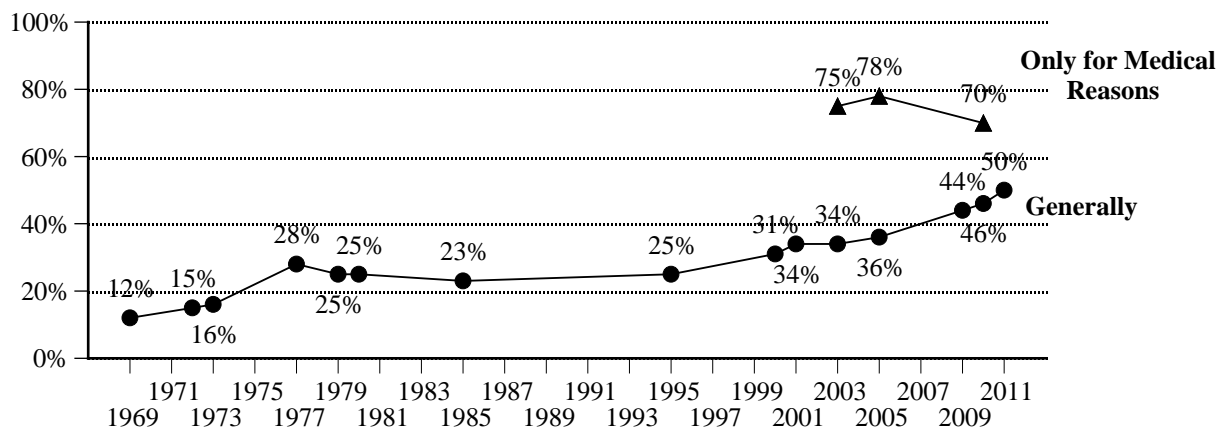
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Record High 50% of U.S. Residents Believe Marijuana Use Should Be Legal; Gap Narrows Between Support for Legalization and That for Only Legalizing Medical Marijuana

U.S. residents have consistently been more likely to favor the use of marijuana for medicinal purposes than to favor its legalization generally. For example, 34% of U.S. residents polled by the Gallup organization in 2003 reported that they thought all marijuana use should be made legal, compared to 75% who reported that they favored making it legal for doctors to prescribe marijuana in order to reduce pain and suffering. The most recent Gallup survey indicates that the gap between these views may be closing. In October 2011, one-half of U.S. residents reported that they think marijuana use should be legalized—the highest percentage since the question was first asked in 1969.* In comparison, 70% of Americans supported legalizing marijuana for medical use in 2010 (the most recent year in which this question was asked). While medical marijuana use is legal in 16 states and the District of Columbia,** the manufacturing, distributing, possessing, or marketing of marijuana remains illegal under federal law.

Percentage of U.S. Adult Household Residents Reporting That They Think Marijuana Should Be Made Legal Generally or Only for Medical Reasons, 1969-2011



*Support for legalizing marijuana is inversely correlated with age. For example, 62% of 18 to 29 year olds support legalizing marijuana, compared to 31% of those ages 65 or older.

**Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Maine, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington. Maryland has a limited medical marijuana defense for possession only and is not included in the count of the number of states with medical marijuana laws.

NOTES: 2011 results are based on landline and cellular phone interviews conducted October 6-9, 2011 with a random sample of 1,005 adults ages 18 and older living in the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. Samples are weighted by gender, age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, education, region, adults in the household, and phone status. Margin of error is ± 4 percentage points.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Gallup, "Record-High 50% of Americans Favor Legalizing Marijuana Use," *Press Release*, October 17, 2011. Available online at <http://www.gallup.com/poll/150149/Record-High-Americans-Favor-Legalizing-Marijuana.aspx>.