

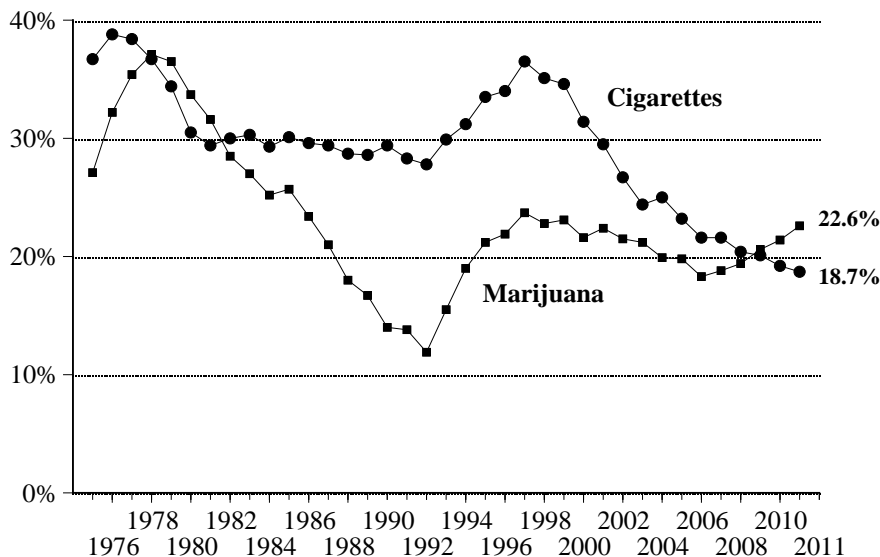
**A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research**

**University of Maryland, College Park**

***U.S. High School Seniors More Likely to Use Marijuana Than to Smoke Cigarettes***

High school seniors are more likely to use marijuana than to smoke cigarettes in the past month, according to the most recent data from the national Monitoring the Future survey. In 2011, 18.7% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported smoking cigarettes in the past month, continuing a substantial decline from the most recent high of 36.5% in 1997. In contrast, marijuana use has been increasing since 2006, reaching 22.6% in 2011—a level not seen since the mid-1980s. Similar trends in cigarette and marijuana use have occurred among 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders.\* One possible explanation for these findings is a change in the perception of risk for these substances. The percentage of 12<sup>th</sup> grades who perceive a great risk of harm in smoking one or more packs of cigarettes per day has increased over the last two decades, reaching 77.7% in 2011. At the same time, the percentage who perceive a great risk of harm from smoking marijuana regularly has decreased to 45.7% in 2011 (data not shown).

**Percentage of U.S. 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Students Reporting Past Month Use of Cigarettes or Marijuana, 1975 to 2011**



\*In 2011, 6.1% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders reported smoking cigarettes in the past month and 7.2% reported using marijuana. Among 10<sup>th</sup> graders, 11.8% reported smoking cigarettes, and 17.6% reported using marijuana.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from University of Michigan, "Trends in 30-Day Prevalence of Use of Various Drugs in Grade 12," Monitoring the Future Study, 2011. Available online at <http://www.monitoringthefuture.org/data/11data/pr11t17.pdf>