



# Cannabis Policy: Time for the Guardrails

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# The Cannabis Kids Menu

Many products, even of very high potency, are blatantly attractive to kids

## Cannabis Product or Not?

California, along with the rest of the nation, is experiencing an explosion of children being rushed to emergency departments due to accidental ingestion/overconsumption of psychoactive cannabis products that often mimic some of their favorite brands of candy, soda, or snacks. Don't believe us?

Do you think a child could distinguish these cannabis products from the commonly sold ones or characters they are mimicking?



### Legally Sold Cannabis Products



**MacFlurry:** Flower. Imitates popular fast food chain dessert and its branding (logo, product colors, graphics), association with ice cream flavoring.



**Cocoa Pebbles:** Flower. Prominent display of kid friendly imagery, insinuates chocolate flavor, imitates popular cereal marketed to children, use of bright green/orange colors.



**Bobbi Hyll:** Flower. Depiction of youth friendly imagery, imitates popular animated tv show, its branding (logo, colors), and characters, use of bright colors & cannabis plant graphic.



**Purple Smurf:** Flower. Likeness to classic children's cartoon/movie franchise, imitates name, logo and mushroom house imagery. Name of brand, Yogi Baer, is a variant of the name of a popular cartoon character.



**Chips:** Description of cheese and onion flavors prominently featured, imitates Funyuns and Fritos chips, depiction of famous artist and their popular phrasing style.



**Sweet Treats:** Packaging and product imitates commonly sold kids rice crispy treat/cereal, features flavor description, contains multiple doses (10/package) not physically separated, use of bright colors.



**Gummies:** Prominent display of fruits and flavors, including tropical, marketed as having a great taste and being healthy (vegan, gluten free).



**Blunts:** Flavor description prominently featured, references specific type of chocolate product. **Concentrates:** High potency product, imitates Skittles (Zkittlez), features images of candy and implies "juiciness," use of bright colors.



**Beverages:** Each can, a normal drink size, has ten doses of cannabis. Arnie's depicts a cartoon character, fruits images and a rocketship, and use bright colors. "Keef Orange Kush" imitates Fanta Orange soda.

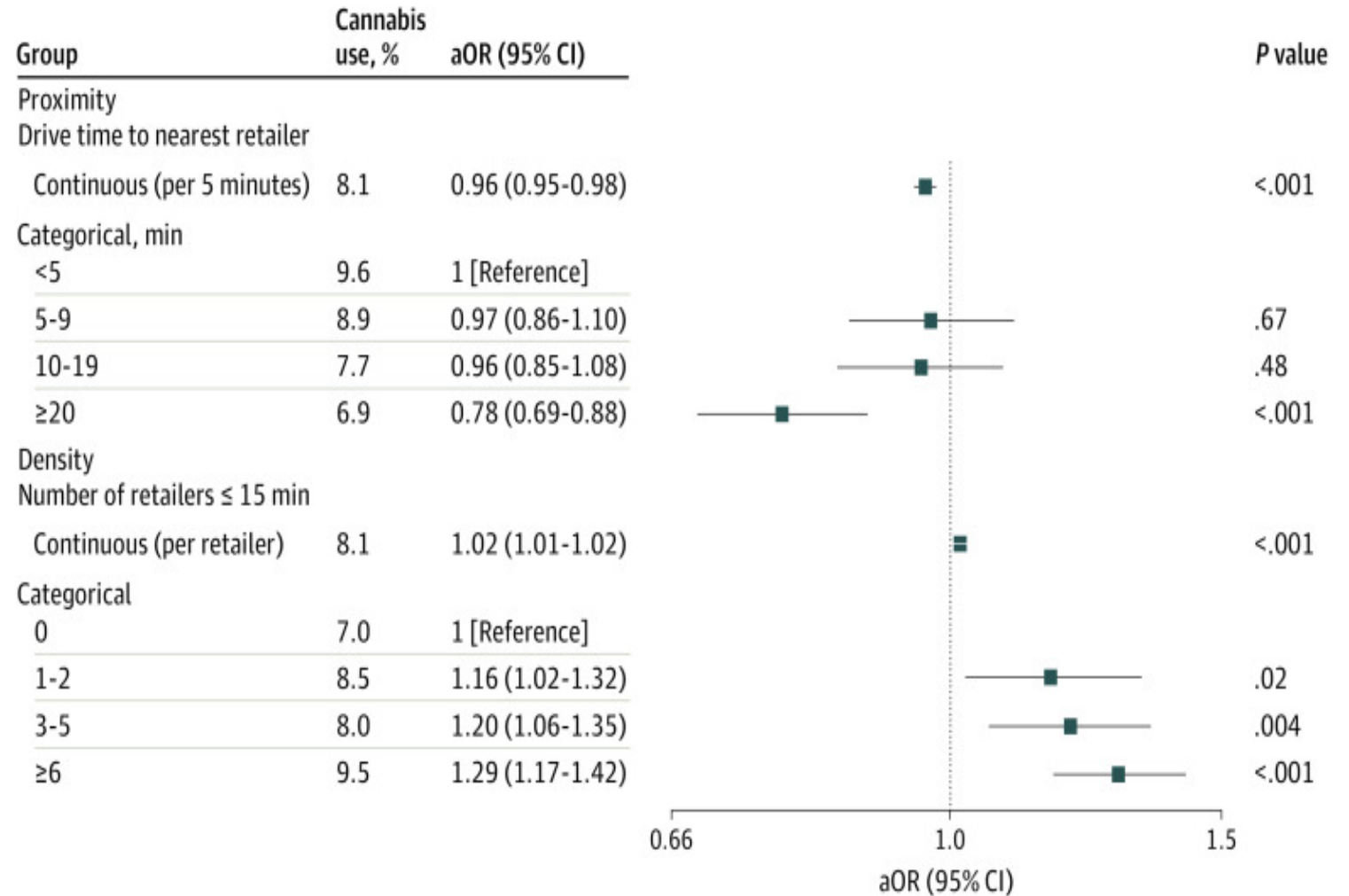
# Prenatal cannabis use associated with distance to and density of legal cannabis retailers in Northern California in 2018

Cross sectional study of 39,278  
pregnancies in Kaiser Permanente





# Adjusted Odds Ratios (aOR) for Prenatal Cannabis Use by Proximity to and Density of Cannabis Retailers Northern California 2018 (n=39,278)



Source: Young-Wolff KC, Slama NE, Padon AA, Silver LD, et al JAMA Network Open 2022.

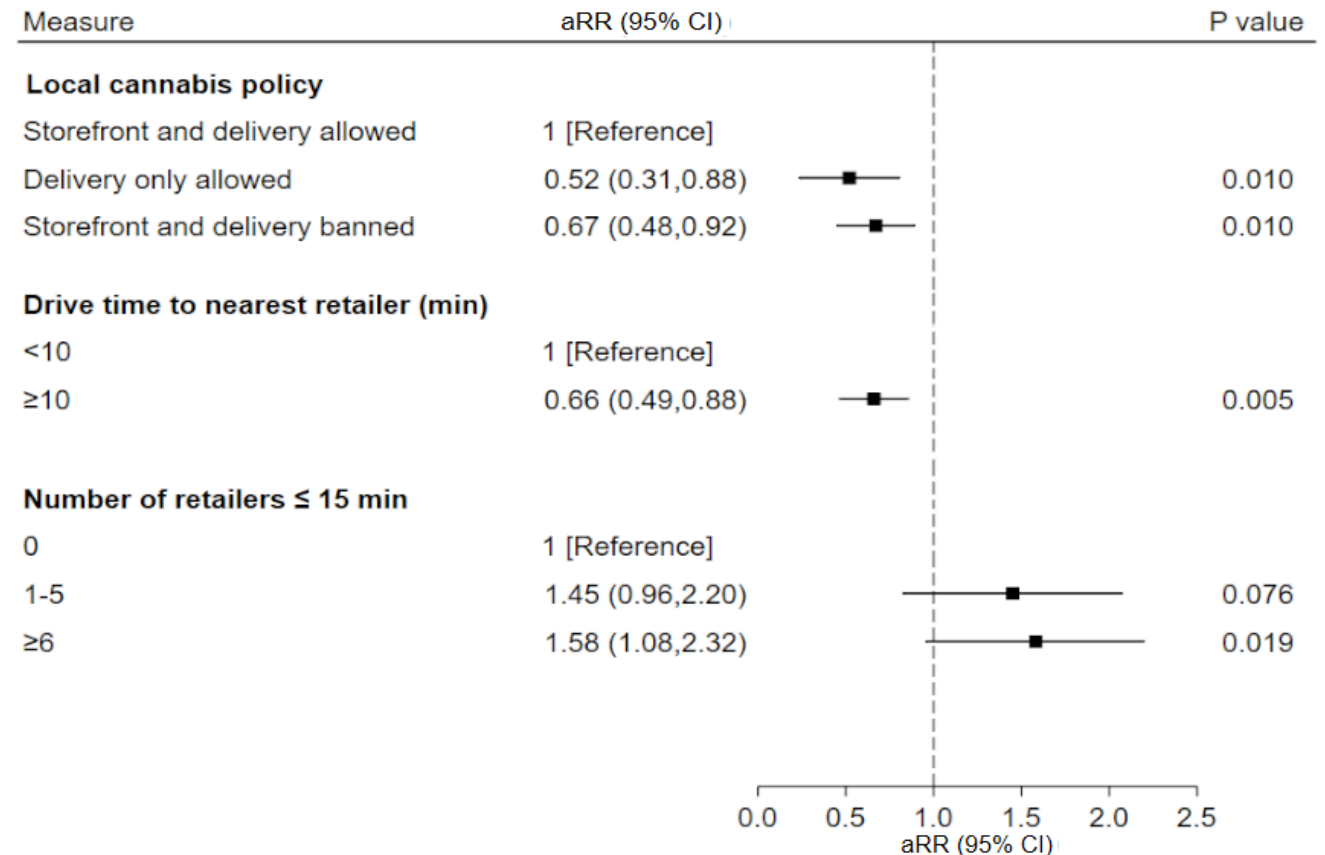
# Adolescent psychosis positively associated with legal retail access, less distance to nearest retailer, and retail density

Cross sectional EHR based study of 95,000 adolescents  
ages 13-17 years in Kaiser Permanente Northern  
California in 2021



# Past Year Psychotic Disorders in Northern California Adolescents 2021 by local policy, distance to and density of cannabis retailers

Past year psychotic disorder diagnosis by local cannabis policy,  
and distance to and density of retailers  
in Northern California adolescents, 2022 (n=95,000)



Source: NIDA R01DA058201 (Young-Wolff)

Young-Wolff KC, Silver LD, et al. In preparation. Preliminary data not for citation

Our state and local cannabis policies are directly associated with major risks for adverse outcomes in children and youth including those arising from *in utero* exposure and cannabis associated psychosis and schizophrenia.

Legal stores probably don't just "substitute" the corner dealer.

# Time for a Clarion Call for Guardrails

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- Rethinking models of economic structuring of the legal industry to avoid a new Big Tobacco, consider nonprofit and monopoly models
- Building regulatory systems exempt from conflict of interest and focused on harm reduction
- Prioritizing not driving up consumption or harm over economic growth and rapid replacement of the illicit industry
- Significantly dialing back product diversification and increasing potency that increases risk of serious harms
- Creating rigorous guardrails on production quantity, product content, marketing characteristics, claims, advertising and requiring plain packaging
- Ending the cannabis “kids menu”
- Requiring accurate consumer information through prominent graphic warnings on packages and ads, public education and restraints on claims
- Building federal leadership with or without legalization





Thank you

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