# Drivers drinking less, doing drugs more, survey finds

## Marijuana use rises sharply since 2007

BY JOAN LOWY
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The number of drivers on the road with alcohol in their systems has declined by nearly one-third since 2007, but there has been a large increase in drivers using marijuana and other illegal drugs, a government report released Friday stated.

The report by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said the share of drivers who test positive for alcohol has declined by more than three-quarters since the agency first began conducting roadside surveys in 1973.

But the latest survey also found that nearly one in four drivers tested positive for at least one drug that could affect safety.

The anonymous surveys have been conducted five times over the last 40 years. They gather data in dozens of locations across the country from drivers who agree to participate.

Mark Rosekind, head of the safety administration, credited anti-drunk driving efforts for the decline, but said "there is no victory as long as a single American dies in an alcohol-related crash."

About 8 percent of drivers during weekend nighttime hours were found to have some alcohol in their system, and 1.5 percent were found with .08 percent or higher breath alcohol content — the legal limit in every state. The number of drivers with any alcohol in their systems is down by about 30 percent from the previous survey in 2007 and 77 percent from the first survey in 1973.

At the same time, the number of weekend nighttime drivers with evidence of illegal drugs in their systems climbed from 16.3 percent in 2007 to 20 percent in 2014. The number of drivers with marijuana in their systems grew by nearly 50 percent over the same period of time.

"The rising prevalence of marijuana and other drugs is a challenge to everyone who is dedicated to saving lives and reducing crashes," Rosekind warned.

A second survey, the largest of its kind, assessed whether marijuana use by drivers is associated with greater risk of crashes.

The survey found that marijuana users are more likely to be involved in accidents, but that the increased risk may be due in part because marijuana users are more likely to be part of demographic groups at higher risk of crashes generally.

In particular, marijuana users are more likely to be young men — a group already at high risk.

SUSANA MARTINEZ, GOVERNOR

NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

RETTA WARD, CABINET SECRETARY

Representative William Rehm
Box 14768
Albuquerque, NM

Dear Representative Rehm,

New Mexico has long faced an epidemic of drug overdose death that has dramatically impacted the lives of families and the fabric of our communities. In 2010, New Mexico ranked second in the nation for the highest drug overdose death rate and over the past decade our state's drug overdose death rate has increased almost 80%. Since 2007, that death rate has been driven by overdoses with prescription drugs. Clearly we are facing a public health crisis of immense proportion to which we are compelled as public servants to respond.

The NM Legislature passed Senate Bill 215 in 2012 establishing the Prescription Drug Misuse and Overdose Prevention and Pain Management Advisory Council. With Governor-appointed membership comprised of representatives from professional healthcare licensing boards, as well as two community advocates, the Council is directed to review the current status of prescription drug misuse and overdose prevention and current pain management practices in New Mexico, hear from experts in the field and provide recommendations to inform both public and private sector response on this issue.

The Council's first report, issued a year ago, included a number of recommendations that have led to actions taken by healthcare provider licensing boards to revise rules associated with prescription of opioid pain medication as well as tracking and reporting of those prescription fills by the Board of Pharmacy.

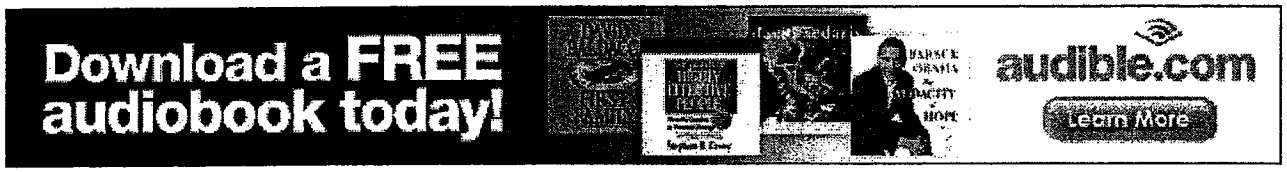
Here, the Council issues its 2013 Recommendations, calling for a wide range of efforts to combat the epidemic of prescription drug misuse and overdose, including public education efforts (a statewide multi-media campaign to call attention to the importance of safe use, storage and disposal of prescription drugs), reduced barriers to provision of opioid replacement therapy, for addiction treatment, and support for the inclusion of naloxone, the life saving medication that can revive an individual from an opioid overdose, for patients who are on high dose opioid prescriptions for chronic pain.

On behalf of the Advisory Council and the Department of Health, I submit to you the 2014 Prescription Drug Misuse and Overdose Prevention and Pain Management Advisory Council Recommendations.

Sincerely,

Michael Landen

Michael Landen, MD, MPH
State Epidemiologist




CNN.com

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# Drunken driving declines in U.S.; drug use 'troubling,' agency says

- Story Highlights
- 2.2 percent of drivers in 2007 had blood alcohol content of 0.8 percent or higher
- Rate is down from 7.5 percent in 1973, when first such test was conducted
- Survey found that 16.3 percent of nighttime weekend drivers tested positive for drugs
- Marijuana, cocaine, over-the-counter and prescription drugs are most common

**WASHINGTON (CNN)** -- Fewer Americans are driving drunk, but roughly one in six drivers on weekend nights is on drugs, according to a data released Monday by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration survey.

In a survey conducted in 2007, 2.2 percent of drivers had a blood-alcohol content of 0.8 percent or higher, which would exceed the limit for driving while intoxicated in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, the agency said in a news release.

The first such survey, conducted in 1973, found 7.5 percent of drivers above the 0.8 limit, the release said. Other surveys were conducted in 1986 and 1996.

"I'm pleased to see that our battle against drunk driving is succeeding," Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said in the news release.

"However, alcohol still kills 13,000 people a year on our roads and we must continue to be vigilant in our efforts to prevent drunk driving."

The 2007 survey was the first to also check for drug use while driving. It found that 16.3 percent of nighttime weekend drivers tested positive for drugs, according to the statement.

The drugs used most commonly by drivers were marijuana (8.6 percent), cocaine (3.9 percent) and over-the-counter and prescription drugs (3.9 percent), it said.

"This troubling data shows us, for the first time, the scope of drugged driving in America and reinforces the need to reduce drug abuse," said Gil Kerlikowske, director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

The survey involved setting up random sites across the country to question drivers who participated voluntarily and on condition of anonymity.

In total, almost 11,000 eligible drivers entered the survey sites, with 9,413 drivers agreeing to breath-alcohol measurements, 7,719 providing oral fluid samples and 3,276 nighttime drivers submitting blood samples, the news release said.

**All About** Drunk Driving • Ray LaHood • National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

**Find this article at:**
http://www.cnn.com/2009/CRIME/07/13/drunken.driving

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

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# Shocking TAC ad aimed at drug-drivers to reduce road toll

Article from: Herald Sun



**Geraldine Mitchell**
July 14, 2009 12:00am

**A SHOCKING TV advertisement depicting a horrific death is the latest campaign to stop drugged drivers from getting behind the wheel.**

The TAC advertisement, which will appear on television screens tonight alongside radio and billboard campaigns, is aimed at dramatically reducing the number of road deaths.

Victoria Police statistics show 100 Victorians who lost their lives on the roads last year had drugs in their system and 60 of those tested positive to cannabis.

Premier John Brumby said he was alarmed at the number of people who believed they were better drivers after smoking cannabis.

Mr Brumby said cannabis and stimulants were the most commonly detected illegal drugs on the road.

"I know people and they'll tell you that when they use cannabis they're better, they're sharper, when they use cannabis they're more relaxed, they drive better... well, rubbish they are," he said.

"This is an accurate depiction of what happens, and what happens to real people and what happened to 60 Victorians last year and all of them could have been people we know, 60 of them, and they're dead with cannabis in their system."

The advertisement depicts a drug driver experiencing impaired mental function that leads to waiting longer than necessary at a stop sign, driving over a kerb and into the middle of the road and stepping into traffic.

Victoria Police deputy commissioner for road policing Ken Lay said anyone injured in a road accident would now have their blood tested for drugs as well as alcohol.

news.com.au

National News

# Shocking anti-drug driving ad to hit TV

By Geraldine MitchellHerald SunJuly 14, 2009 03:45pm

- Shocking ad to be launched tonight
- Depicts horrific death on road
- Aims to stop drug-driving
- Full story at the *Herald Sun*

A SHOCKING TV advertisement depicting a horrific death is the latest campaign to stop drugged drivers from getting behind the wheel.

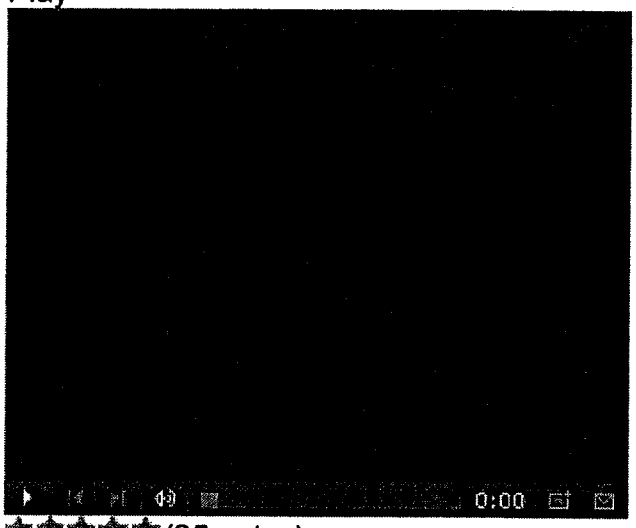
The TAC advertisement, which will appear on television screens in Victoria tonight alongside radio and billboard campaigns, is aimed at dramatically reducing the number of road deaths, the *Herald Sun* reports.

Victorian Premier John Brumby said he was alarmed at the number of people who believed they were better drivers after smoking cannabis.

"I know people and they'll tell you that when they use cannabis they're better, they're sharper, when they use cannabis they're more relaxed, they drive better... well, rubbish they are," he said.

"This is an accurate depiction of what happens, and what happens to real people and what happened to 60 Victorians last year and all of them could have been people we know, 60 of them, and they're dead with cannabis in their system."

Play

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Shock campaign-Graphic Content
A new shocking TV ad, showing a horrific death, is the latest TAC attempt to stop drugged drivers...
Views today: 862
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The advertisement depicts a drug driver experiencing impaired mental function that leads to waiting longer than necessary at a stop sign, driving over a kerb and into the middle of the road and stepping into traffic.

Victoria Police deputy commissioner for road policing Ken Lay said anyone injured in a road accident would now have their blood tested for drugs as well as alcohol.

THE STREETS AREN'T THE ONLY PLACE KIDS FIND DRUGS.

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# Colorado Law on Driving Under the Influence of Marijuana Takes Effect

By Join Together Staff | June 11, 2013 | 4 Comments | Filed in Community Related, Drugs & Legal

A new law that sets legal limits on marijuana levels in the bloodstream took effect in Colorado on May 28. Under the new law, drivers are assumed to be impaired if their blood test shows a level of THC—the active ingredient in marijuana—of 5 or more nanograms per milliliter.

Josh Lewis, a spokesman for the Colorado State Patrol, said the new law will not significantly change how police handle stops for driving under the influence. More officers will be trained in drug recognition, he said.

There is no broadly accepted consensus on how much marijuana a person must consume before they are impaired, The New York Times reports. Some critics of the law say the 5-nanogram threshold is too low because medical marijuana users always have some THC in their blood. Others argue the blood test used to measure THC levels is too intrusive. Washington state has also imposed a 5-nanogram limit for THC for drivers.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is studying the effects of marijuana on drivers, the article notes. Results are expected in late 2014.

# White House assails legalization of pot

*Administration seeks $25 billion for war on drugs, wants more treatment*

A1 7/10/14

BY ROB HOTAKAINEN
MCCLATCHY-TRIBUNE

WASHINGTON — A day after Washington state joined Colorado in selling marijuana in retail outlets, the Obama administration on Wednesday criticized drug legalization and warned that a declining perception of risk is leading more U.S. teens to smoke pot.

In a report to Congress, the White House drug czar's office said it wants to spend $25 billion next year as part of a broad drug-fighting plan, including more on treatment for people addicted to heroin and prescription painkillers. It described the abuse of opioids as a national epidemic.

"We cannot leave people behind," said Michael Botticelli, the acting drug czar and

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# DEA official: Legal marijuana 'reckless'

3/5/14

By Associated Press

Hartigan testified Tuesday man Rep. John Mica, R-Flor before a House oversight pan Said the country was making said the country was making WASHINGTON — Assistant Dr. Chuck Rosenberg, testifying before a House oversight panel on Tuesday, said the country was making a "reckless" experiment by allowing the sale of marijuana for recreational use.

Rosenberg, chief of staff at the Drug Enforcement Administration, told the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform that the agency opposes efforts in Colorado and Washington state to legalize marijuana for recreational use.

"We have a lot of concerns about marijuana," Rosenberg said. "We have a lot of concerns about the fact that it is addictive. We have a lot of concerns about the fact that it is a gateway drug. We have a lot of concerns about the fact that it impairs cognition and psychomotor skills."

Rosenberg's testimony echoed previous statements from Obama administration officials, including Attorney General Eric Holder, who have criticized efforts in Colorado and Washington state to legalize marijuana for recreational use.

Twenty-one states and the District of Columbia have now legalized marijuana for medical use, but Colorado and Washington state have gone further by allowing the sale and use of marijuana for recreational purposes.

Rosenberg said that "reckless" experiment could lead to other states, including Oregon, Alaska and California, voting on legalizing recreational marijuana next year.

The subcommittee chair

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Oct 26/2012

# Man Is Suspected In Another Fatal Crash



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- *Suspect sentenced in death of then-APS chief Vigil in 2003*

By Patrick Lohmann
*Journal Staff Writer*

The man sentenced to prison for the killing of then-Albuquerque Public Schools superintendent Joseph Vigil in a crash nine years ago is now suspected of killing a pedestrian in Farmington while driving under the influence of drugs, Farmington police said.

Joe Raymond Gallegos, 43, struck a woman Wednesday shortly after 5 p.m. as she bent over to pick an item up in a crosswalk at Main Street and Court Avenue, witnesses told Farmington police. She was dragged under Gallegos' SUV for several feet before Gallegos fled into a nearby mobile home to get rid of large amounts of heroin and cocaine, police said.

Witnesses chased Gallegos to the trailer and alerted police, who arrested him under suspicion of driving under the influence, said Farmington Police Department Lt. Tracy Taft.

Police later searched the trailer and found 15.5 grams

## EDITORIALS

# States Must Define One Toke Over the DWI Line

Seventeen states — including New Mexico — and the District of Columbia have legalized medical marijuana.

Meanwhile:

- The percentage of drivers killed in traffic crashes who later tested positive for drugs rose 18 percent between 2005 and 2011.
- Several studies suggest driving after smoking marijuana might almost double the risk of being in a serious or fatal crash.
- A new survey says 19 percent of teen drivers admit to driving under the influence of marijuana and fewer feel it is "very" or "extremely" distracting to their driving.

So it is vital those 17 states and D.C. that have approved medical marijuana get it in gear and determine how stoned is enough to mitigate the crippling effects of disease but not too stoned to get behind the wheel.

Or if users should even be allowed to drive.

Those are tough questions to answer, because unlike alcohol there is no presumed level of intoxication, and unlike standard prescription medications there is no therapeutic level that can be used to determine marijuana treatment versus impairment. THC, the active ingredient in pot, stays in the blood long after the high — and its dizziness, slowed reaction time and tendency to drift and swerve — wears off.

New Mexico lawmakers have considered passing a drugged driving law for years, with each failed proposal allowing therapeutic levels for standard prescription medications and disallowing driving with an illegal drug on board.

In medical marijuana states (New Mexico legalized it in 2007) there's the added wrinkle of trying to regulate safe driving levels of a drug that's legal under state law but illegal under federal law.

It's clearly a difficult proposition, but a necessary one. Medical marijuana is, by design, purer and stronger than most street-grade pot, and the effects of smoking it follow suit.

Someone hit and killed by a law-abiding driver impaired by medical marijuana is just as dead as someone hit and killed by a criminal driver wasted on street dope full of stems, seeds and oregano. Driving is a privilege reserved for those who have exhibited a level of responsibility; medical marijuana use is a privilege reserved for those whose physicians certify are suffering the effects of crippling illness.

And states must finally determine how — and if — those two privileges can coexist.

# DWI for driver who hit pizzeria

*Expert says ABQ man was likely high on heroin, meth, cocaine*

BY NICOLE PEREZ
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

An Albuquerque man was Pedro and Montgomery on Friday, according to police.

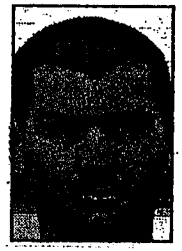
Police found 33-year-old Justin Rodgers sitting in a tan Ford Explorer with the car still in drive. A witness told police she saw the car drive north on San Pedro, then cross over the median and into the southbound lanes before crashing

His blood-alcohol content measured zero, and a drug recognition expert said he was likely high on heroin, methamphetamine and cocaine, according to Albuquerque Police Department complaint. He told an officer he thought he was at his apartment building.

have killed them. We're lucky nobody was hurt."

Rodgers has been convicted of driving while intoxicated three times before, court records show. He was charged with felony DWI and booked into the Metropolitan Detention Center on Friday.

The car he was driving, which



JOURNAL

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METHAMPHETAMINE

# Father: 'I cannot forgive the man who killed my chi

IM students Joseph Mendoza, t, and Briana Hillard. Hillard s killed and Mendoza hurt in ar crash Friday night.

GRANT: Died after car he was riding in was struck

THOMPSON: Injured but released from hospital

## Man describes son's final breaths after deadly crash

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BY NICOLE PEREZ
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

Myron Grant sat in a University of New Mexico Hospital room Saturday night, holding his son's hand. Matthew Grant was on life support, mouth filled with gauze, his chest moving involuntarily as he opened his mouth every few minutes.

"I was watching how far it was between each breath. They got farther and farther and farther apart. He took one more breath and there was not another one in 5 minutes, in 10 minutes, in 30 minutes, in an hour," Myron-Grant said.

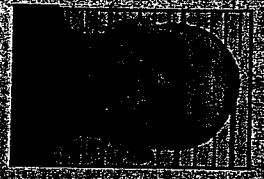
Matthew Grant, 21, took his last apparent breath at 7:27 p.m. Saturday and was officially pronounced dead hours later.

He died after a driver rammed into a car carrying him and three other University of New Mexico stud Rio Grande and Mountain l night while the group was on a house party.

The crash also killed 21 Briana Hillard and serious 21-year-old Joseph Mendoza Thompson, all UNM stude doza was released from th Sunday, and Thompson was to be released Monday nigh

See STUDEN

# Man guilty of 2 counts of vehicular homicide in 2010 crash



Jul 14/13 2013

By Bill Rodgers
*Journal Northern Bureau*

SANTA FE — A Santa Cruz man faces a potential sentence of up to 15 years after a Jury Wednesday convicted him for two counts of vehicular homicide and a single count of great bodily injury by vehicle.

After deliberating for about six hours Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning, the jury decided that David Gurule, 40, was driving recklessly when he crashed a Suzuki SUV killing 18-month-old Zacarian King and 22-year-old Michelle Cota in May 2010.

The crash also injured Zacarian's mother and Gurule's girlfriend, Patricia King. All three victims were passengers in Gurule's vehicle.

Jurors in the state District Court trial in Santa Fe did not find that Gurule was under the influence of prescription painkillers at the time of the crash. That finding would have exposed Gurule to an additional 12-year sentence, with each charge potentially adding four years to the sentence if Gurule had a prior DWI within 10 years of the crash. A state court records database indicates he was found guilty of DWI in February 2009 in Santa Fe Co Magistrate Court.

Paula Macias and Hol vas, Cota's sisters, sai were looking forward ting some rest followi trial. They were both Gurule was found guilt if it wasn't for driving the influence.

"That's good enough f Macias said.

See DRIVER on PA

GURULE: Faces 15 years in prison after jury verdict

## Cops: Fatal-crash suspect had drugs

12/4/14

SANTA FE — A man charged vehicular homicide in a fatal accident last month near Santa Fe was driving "like a bat out of hell" before the crash, and marijuana and an empty prescription drug bottle were found in his vehicle, according to a police affidavit for a search warrant.

According to the document, 911 calls started coming in around 10:30 a.m. Nov. 14 that a white Ford Roughsurface after he pointed his gun at police, according to news release.

The incident on Friday began when San Juan County Sheriff's deputies were investigating reports of a person who was threatening people around the town of Spencerville, with a gun. Spencerville is northeast of Farmington.

State Police assisted in the investigation. Kempe, a 12-year veteran, spotted Roughsurface and fired because he felt an immediate threat to officers.

Police say Roughsurface had a rifle and pistol on him.

An investigation is

## Suspect says he was hired to kill

CLOVIS — A criminal complaint says a 25-year-old man told police he was hired to kill a 23-year-old woman who was later found dead in a Clovis park.

Explorer was traveling recklessly on U.S. 84/285 near Pojoaque and was "pushing other vehicles off the roadway." A motorist reported that the Explorer almost sideswiped several other vehicles before stopping

Jimmy Griego, 59, believed to be from Santa Fe, was arrested on foot nearby. Celeste Maestas, driving a Chevrolet Impala northbound, was pronounced dead at the scene after she crashed after making an evasive maneuver to try to avoid Griego's vehicle.

A bag with less than one ounce of marijuana, two small tins of marijuana, a marijuana pipe, an empty bottle for an epilepsy and shingles medicine and a prescription for oxycodone-acetaminophen were found in Griego's vehicle, the affidavit says.