STATEWIDE IMPAIRED DRIVING

Informing the Campaign through Testing

OBJECTIVES

- Measure how prevalent driving after consuming marijuana is in Texas

- Understand perceptions surrounding danger of driving under the influence of marijuana

- Test messages designed to change behavior and mindset surrounding marijuana impaired driving

This project is not:

- A study related in any way to the legalization of marijuana
- A study related to the science behind marijuana impairment
- A study related to the number of crashes or fatalities caused by marijuana impairment

QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY

Poll fielded January 11–21, 2019

775 sample size using internet panels
- 300 quota of current marijuana users
- 75 quota of Spanish dominant speakers

Weighted and balanced to be representative of Texas across geographic, demographic and psychographic categories

QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

Focus groups conducted March 19–21, 2019

Two focus groups conducted in each of three cities: Dallas, El Paso and Houston
- Two groups conducted in Spanish: One 18–24 year old and one 25–40 year old
- Four groups conducted in English: One 18–24 year old and three 25–40 year old

All participants current marijuana users, mix of all other characteristics

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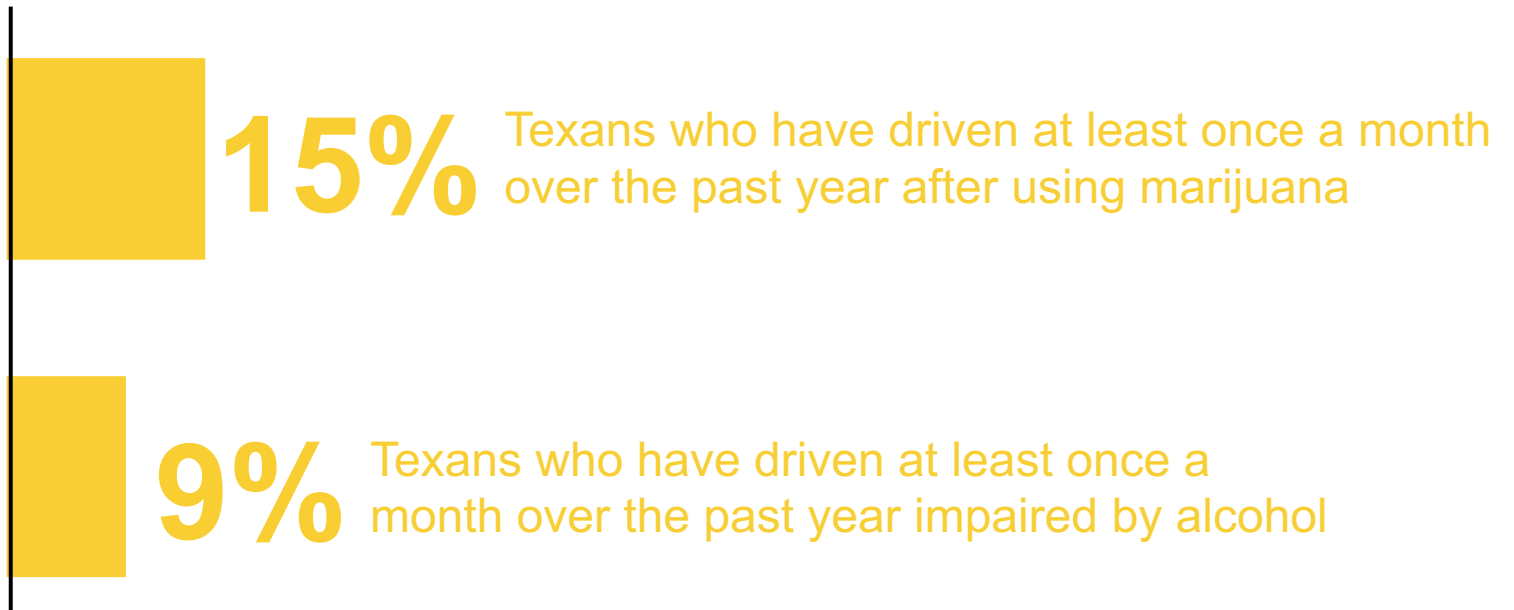
KEY FINDING ONE

Texans are engaging in dangerous behaviors with regard to usage of marijuana and driving
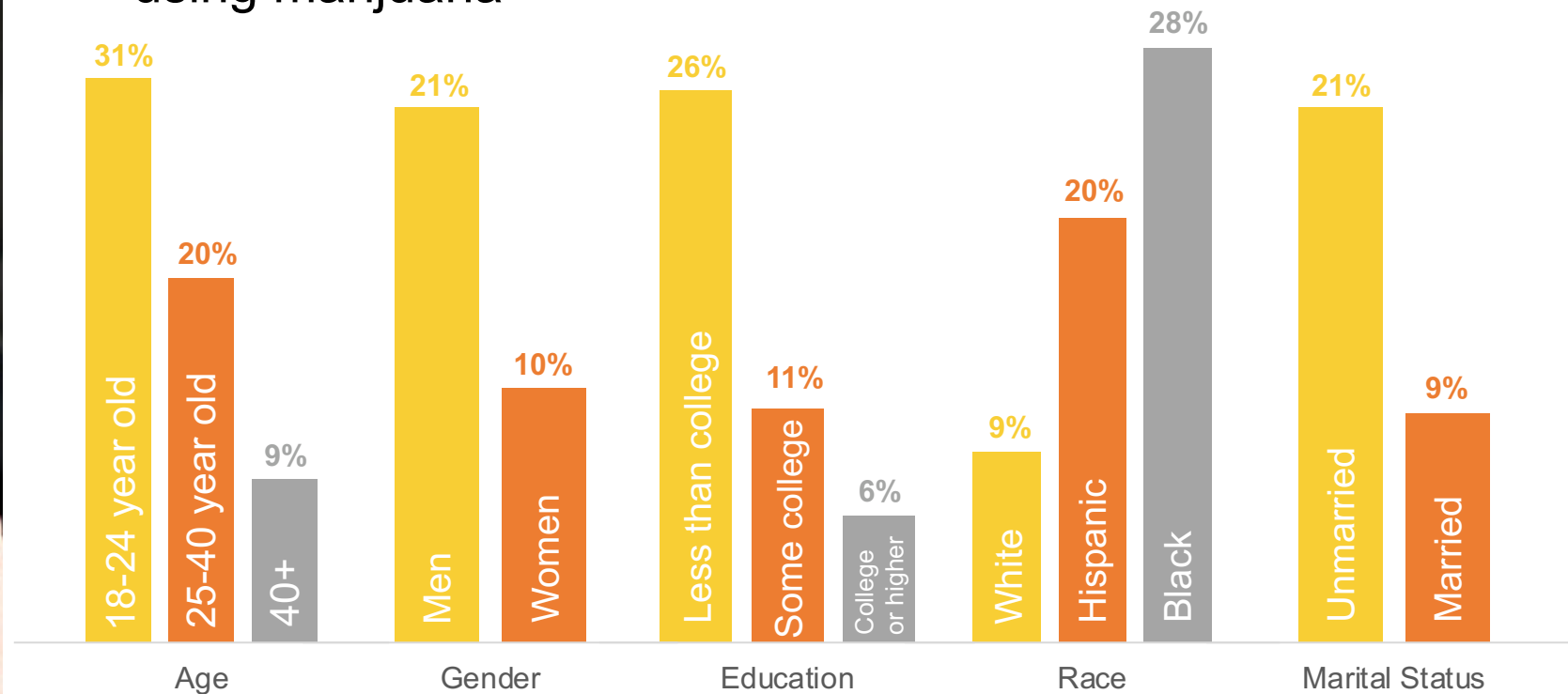
QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

KEY FINDING ONE:
Texans are engaging in dangerous behaviors with regard to usage of marijuana and driving

15% Texans who have driven at least once a month over the past year after using marijuana

9% Texans who have driven at least once a month over the past year impaired by alcohol

KEY FINDING ONE:
Texans are engaging in dangerous behaviors with regard to usage of marijuana and driving

- The overwhelming majority of marijuana users (67%) report either not having a plan or having a weak or inconsistent plan for a sober ride after they have used marijuana

KEY FINDING ONE:
Texans are engaging in dangerous behaviors with regard to usage of marijuana and driving

- More than one—third of Texans (35%) report they have been a passenger in a vehicle driven by someone under the influence of marijuana this year

KEY FINDING TWO

Texans are not knowledgeable about the dangers of driving after using marijuana

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Danger of Crash

28% Texans that view driving after using marijuana as extremely dangerous

51% Texans that view driving under the influence of alcohol as extremely dangerous

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Danger of Crash

- Users are far less likely (20%) to view driving after using marijuana as extremely dangerous than the total population

- Fewer people believe marijuana is extremely dangerous than driving while texting or driving after using other illegal drugs
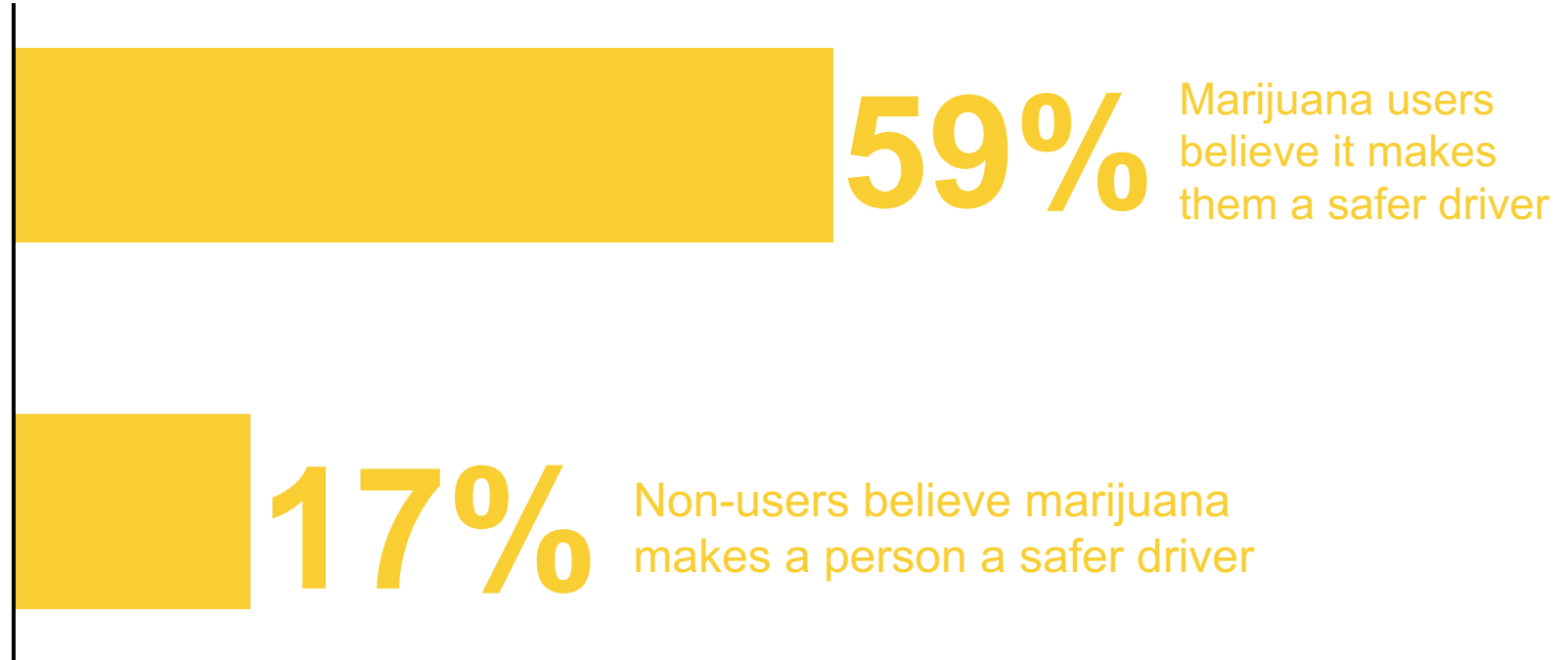
Danger of Crash

- When forced to chose whether driving after using marijuana made one a safer or less safe driver, 33% of Texans state marijuana makes a person a safer driver

Danger of Arrest

- 37% of respondents believe driving under the influence of marijuana is either not illegal or has a lower penalty than driving under the influence of alcohol

- 31% of Texans report a police officer would have no way of knowing if someone was under the influence of marijuana upon being pulled over

MOST EFFECTIVE MESSAGING

QUANTITATIVE RESULT

Police departments are investing in new equipment and training officers to detect people driving under the influence of marijuana

If a person gets behind the wheel while under the influence of marijuana, they could get in a crash and kill themselves

The penalties for operating a motor vehicle under the influence of marijuana are the same as operating a vehicle under the influence of alcohol

AUDIENCES

Poll results show incredible divergence on both mindset and willingness to change based. Two distinct audiences emerged:

- General public

- Current marijuana users

AUDIENCES

General Public

- Mindset far more mailable with higher likelihood to switch positions

- Important audience to create social change

AUDIENCES

Current Marijuana Users

- Tend to have firm engrained opinions
- This is the audience we must reach to reduce incidence of driving after using marijuana

KEY FINDING ONE

Driving under the influence of marijuana
is extremely common

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Key Finding One
Driving under the influence of marijuana is extremely common

- Average age of first use: 16
- Most users consume multiple times per week and often daily
- Marijuana users state they enjoy smoking while driving without being prompted
- Many users drive multiple times per week after using marijuana
- This contrasts with alcohol where the average drunk driver drives 80 times prior to their first arrest

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

KEY FINDING TWO

Marijuana perceived as improving driving ability

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Key Finding Two
Marijuana perceived as improving driving ability

- Increases focus

- Drive slower

- More patient

- Isolated examples of members of some groups state they personally can not drive after using marijuana
  - These people are all fully comfortable riding in a vehicle with people who have used marijuana

Key Finding Two
Marijuana perceived as improving driving ability

- When asked if they would find it acceptable that a school bus driver would drive their children after having consumed marijuana almost all responded they were fine with that

Key Finding Two
Marijuana perceived as improving driving ability

"I think for the most part you're pretty safe. You're just in a flow state kind of thing, where you'll play some music and just drive away. I mean, it can even be like therapeutic, at least for me. I like driving…Yeah, you're in the zone."

— El Paso participant

Key Finding Two
Marijuana perceived as improving driving ability

"I got a big old line of traffic. As all of us know, living in Houston, 45, 59, Beltway, it don't matter; it's always crowded and most of us probably drive in rush hour. For me, it is a way to not have road rage, to not hate the process…"

— **Houston participant**

KEY FINDING THREE

Planning for a sober ride not even a consideration

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Key Finding Three
Planning for a sober ride not even a consideration

- Participants believe police cannot tell who is driving under the influence of marijuana since driving ability is not impacted
  - They believe appearance of smoke or smell of smoke is only clue
- Many do have a plan for after smoking that involves going through a drive-through fast food restaurant or driving to a grocery store for the munchies
- This contrasts with alcohol where almost all participants in these focus groups always have a plan for a sober ride

Key Finding Three
Planning for a sober ride not even a consideration

"I will get in a car with somebody that's high, but I won't get in the car with somebody that's drunk."

— **Houston participant**

Key Finding Three
Planning for a sober ride not even a consideration

"If I'm drunk and trying to get home, I would probably take an Uber. It would be safer for me, versus if I was stoned at a friend's house or a club. I'm like, 'I can get home fine.'"

— Houston participant

KEY FINDING FOUR

Marijuana users sensitive to two stereotypes

Key Finding Four
Marijuana users sensitive to two stereotypes

Reefer madness
- The belief that marijuana is evil and will cause one to "go crazy"

Cheech and Chong
- The belief that marijuana makes a person a joke

Respondents react to any platforms that play on either of these stereotypes by immediately dismissing all messaging

Key Finding Four
Marijuana users sensitive to two stereotypes

"They portray them as goofy, silly, something bad is going to happen or they're not proper or something like that. I've never seen a positive—it ended up fine, but it's always a comedy, you know.

It's either one extreme or the other. Totally serious, 'Oh, my god, they're going to have a wreck and die,' because they were high, or super silly, like driving 30 miles an hour on the freeway."

— Houston participants

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MESSAGE TESTING

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

If a person gets behind the wheel while under the influence of marijuana, they could get in a car crash and kill themselves

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

- Completely ineffective
- Audiences feel safer to drive on marijuana than otherwise
- Felt message was a scare tactic
- Any examples of crashes dismissed since people can get in crashes totally sober

"Yeah, it's just a driver's bad whether they're high or not.

I don't think that weed has any affect on them."

— El Paso participant

"I think anyone that drives is at risk of crashing and dying, not necessarily because you smoked. Someone else could have been smoking or drinking and hit you. It's not just because of the marijuana. It's for other reasons."

— Houston Spanish dominant

(Translator in audio)

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It could cost a person up to $17,000 in fines, court costs, and legal fees if convicted of operating a motor vehicle under the influence of marijuana

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

- Somewhat motivational in that cost makes them pay attention
- However, respondents feel they would not be pulled over
- Also, respondents believe even if they were pulled over for something else, police would not know or care if they were under the influence of marijuana

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

"Even cops know weed is not a big problem. I'll be honest with you all, I've been arrested and I've had weed in the car before…

If you look crazy and if you're acting crazy and you have a little bit of weed, he's going to think there's going to be other stuff, you've got other kind of dope. But if you just act normal, if you're cool, like if you're just regular cool and if you happen to come up on some weed, they'll probably just throw it away and tell you to get out of there."

— El Paso participant

Police departments are investing in new equipment and training officers to detect people driving under the influence of marijuana

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

- Several respondents believed this statement
- Most felt it was motivational
- Most became defensive and stated police resources should be spent elsewhere
- Some showed skepticism on existence of new equipment

"I believe that there's some kind of device that they have or that's in development or close to being used for that, but not that I know it's effectively being used or being used here in Texas. I had heard, as recently as a year or two ago, that they were close to having a breathalyzer version of looking for THC…"

— Dallas participant

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

The penalties for operating a vehicle under the influence of marijuana are the same as operating a vehicle under the influence of alcohol

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

- Statement was moderately motivational as DUI is seen as a big deal by respondents

- Respondents do not believe police would pull them over

- Respondents do not believe police would be able to tell that they had used marijuana

If you feel different, you drive different

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

- Respondents expressed universal agreement with statement

- Respondents continually emphasized different does not mean bad. In this instance different is better.

- This statement could encourage people to drive under the influence of marijuana

"I think the main issue is that alcohol and some of these other things, prescription drugs and Prozac and stuff, they'll affect your motor skills. You'll get physically tired. You might get a little mentally slow, but you can still function if you're high. I might drive a little slower. I might be less motivated to be weaving in and out of traffic, but I'm still fine, even if I am different because I'm high. If I was drunk, I might be doing some dumb things just because it's leaving my mind and also affecting my body in a negative way, too, where marijuana isn't doing that."

— Dallas participant

"If they try to use that as a tagline of, 'Obviously you're not driving your best right now because you feel different.' It's like, 'Yeah, but I feel better. I feel awesome. I feel relaxed. I feel great.' You know what I mean? Don't try to tell me that, because I feel different, now I'm under the influence and I'm obviously a danger to people driving on the road and whatnot and a danger to myself. That's somewhere where I think they try to take that. It's like, that's rude and presumptuous and untrue and, I think, a dangerous rhetoric to start."

— Dallas participant

MOVING FORWARD

- The goal of an effective campaign is to change behavior. This does not mean finding messages that marijuana users like or make them feel better about themselves.

- To change behavior messages must resonate with users. Enforcement messaging that shows:

  - Marijuana impaired driving is a priority for law enforcement
  - There is a real risk you will be pulled over
  - Once pulled over, law enforcement has technology to test you and officers are trained to detect if you are under the influence

MOVING FORWARD

- Tone is vitally important in creative
  - Not over the top
  - Not comedic
- Vitally important to test all creative with users prior to production

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MOVING FORWARD

- For societal change, an effective campaign would utilize messaging targeting all Texans that stressed:
  - It is dangerous to drive after using marijuana
  - It is also illegal to drive after using marijuana
  - The state is now taking marijuana impaired driving seriously and investing in training officers and in new technology