

An Overview of the Government of Canada's Approach to Legalize, Regulate and Restrict Access to Cannabis

CPAA Annual Conference: Reframing the Future: How Communities can Transition Obstacles into Opportunities
May 3, 2017



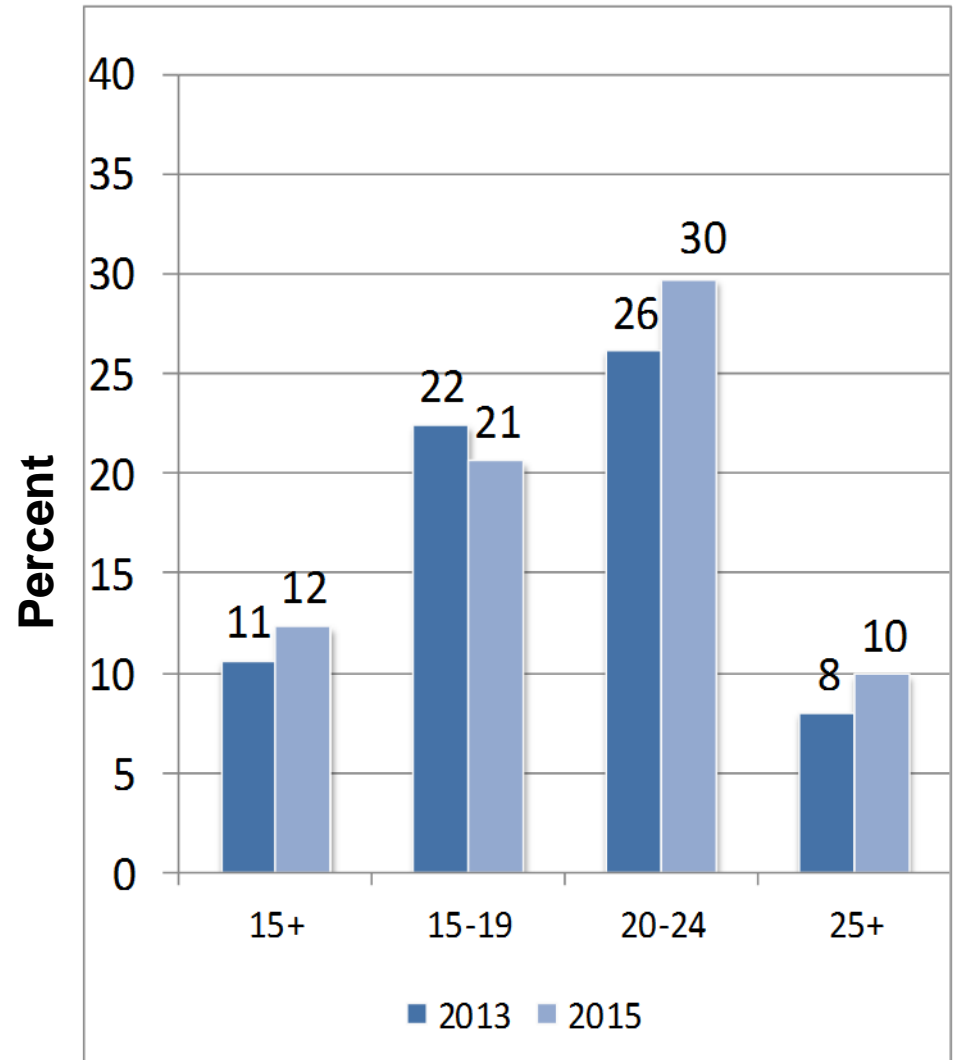
I'm here today to provide...

- 1** Context for the Government of Canada's plan to legalize, regulate and restrict access to cannabis
- 2** An overview of the proposed Cannabis Act
- 3** Information on Government of Canada activities in support of this initiative



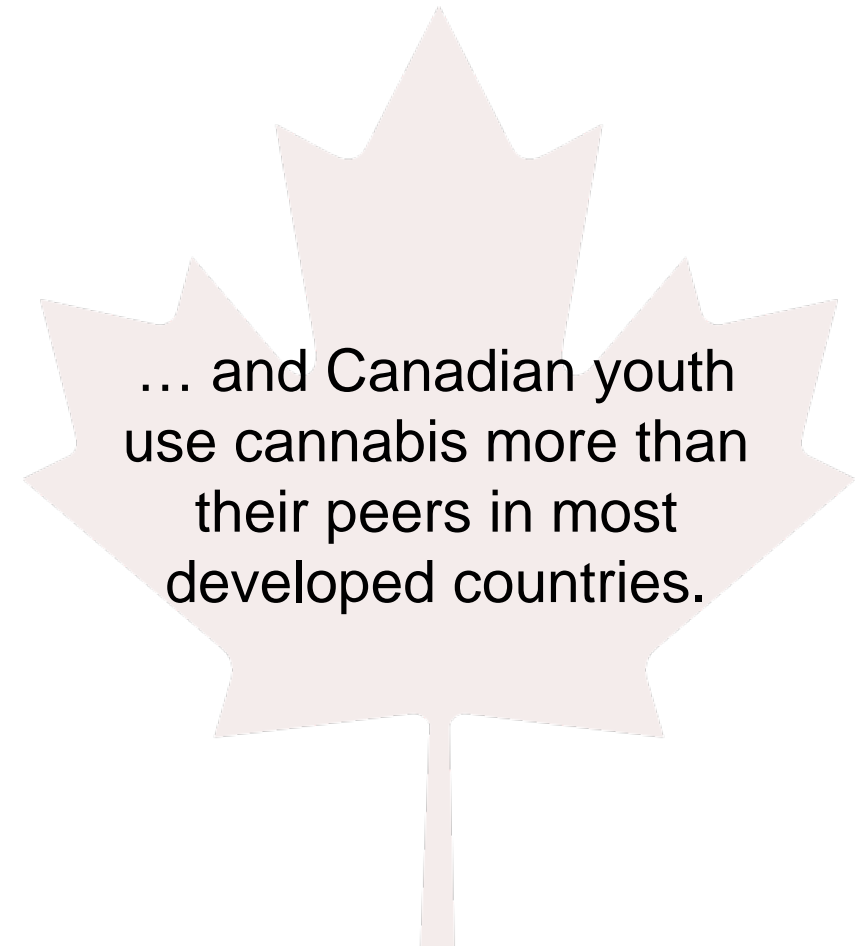
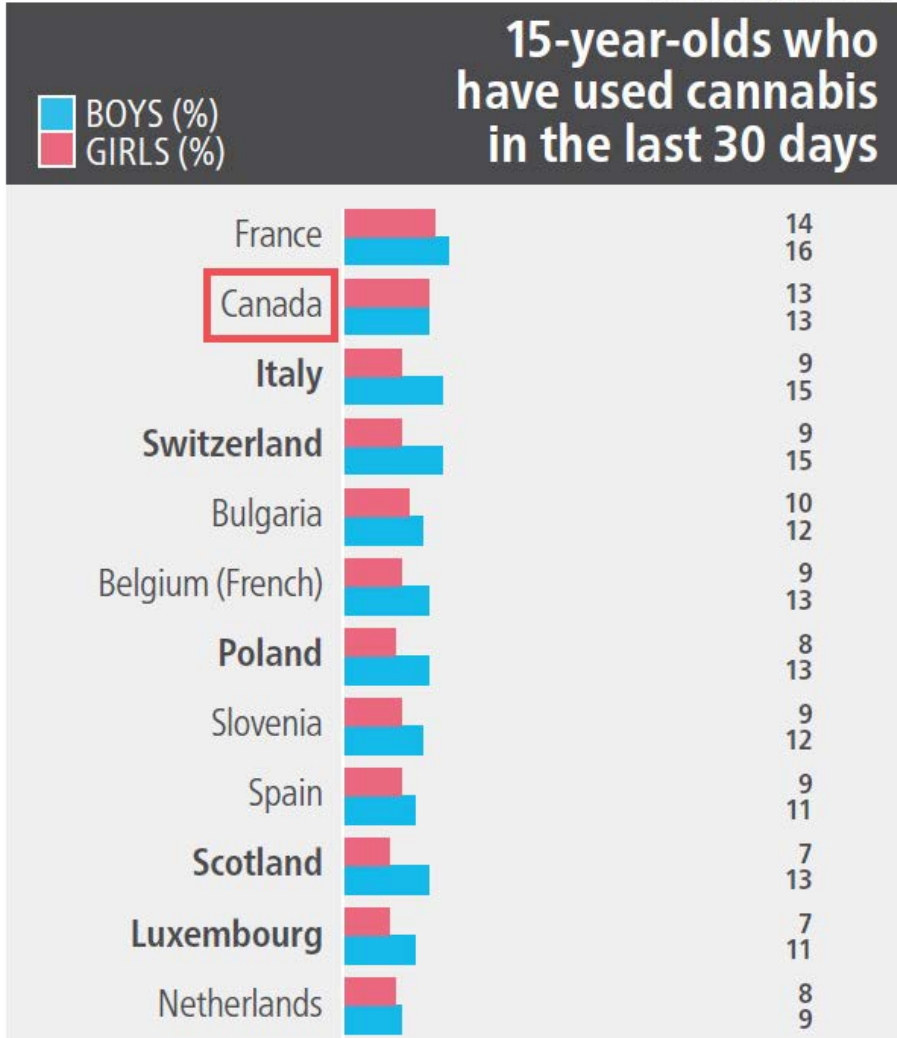
Current Context

Cannabis is the most used illicit substance in Canada...



Current Context (cont.)

HBSC survey 2013/2014



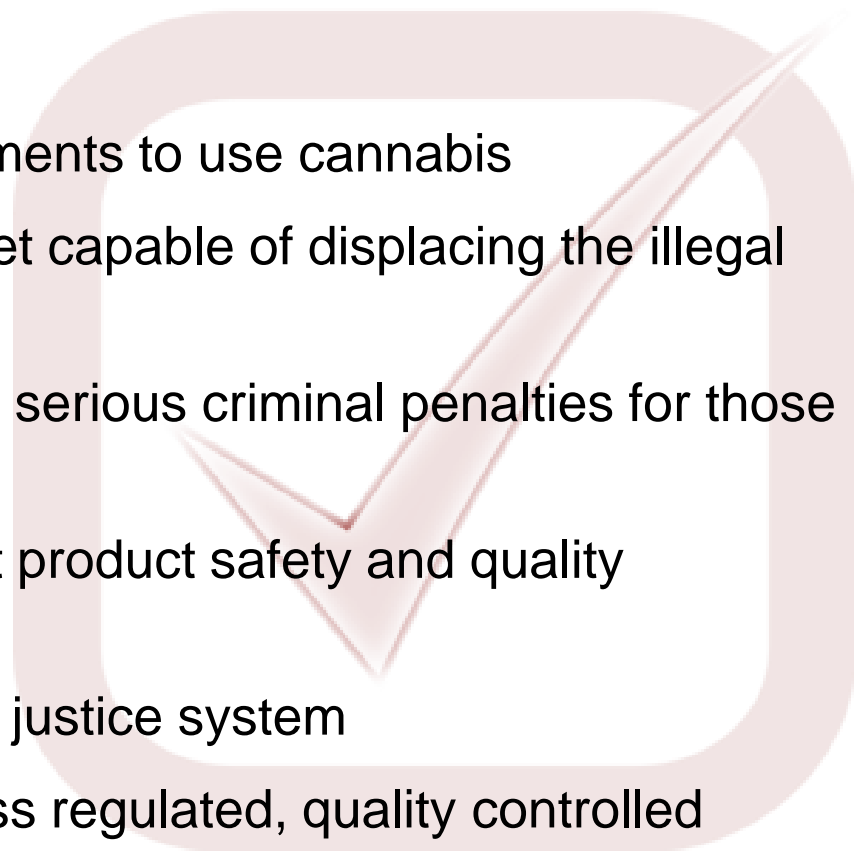
Current Context (cont.)

- 🍁 Public health and safety concerns
 - Health risks from early and heavy use
 - No control on product safety, potency and quality
 - Drug-impaired driving
- 🍁 Broad, entrenched illicit market
- 🍁 Burden on justice system, and associated social impacts
- 🍁 Laws not well understood, inconsistently applied

Government of Canada Objectives

To create a new system for cannabis that will:

- restrict youth access to cannabis
- protect young people from enticements to use cannabis
- provide for a legal cannabis market capable of displacing the illegal market
- deter criminal activity by imposing serious criminal penalties for those breaking the law
- protect public health through strict product safety and quality requirements
- reduce the burden on the criminal justice system
- allow adults to possess and access regulated, quality controlled cannabis



Lessons Learned

Canada has experience regulating access to alcohol, tobacco, pharmaceuticals and medical cannabis.

One other country (Uruguay) and 8 U.S. states and the District of Columbia have taken steps to legalize and regulate cannabis.



Key Takeaways:

- ✓ Complex, multi-year initiative
- ✓ Adaptability and flexibility
- ✓ Public education
- ✓ Consultation and collaboration
- ✓ Enforcement
- ✓ Monitoring and ongoing system refinement

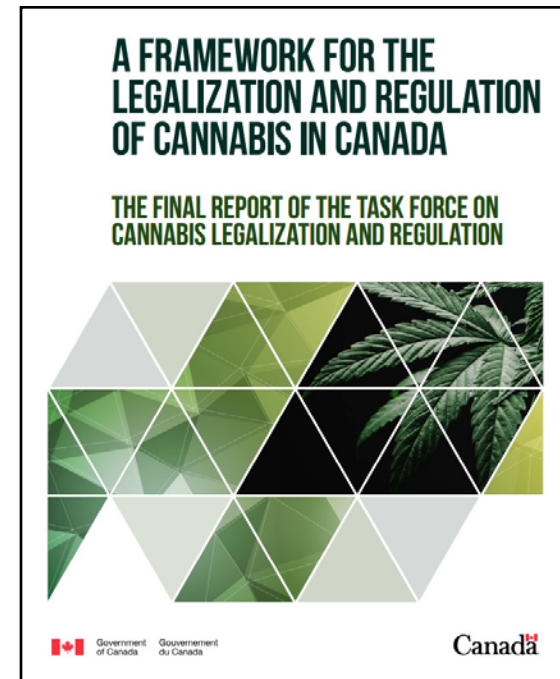
The Task Force on Cannabis Legalization and Regulation

June 30, 2016 - Task Force created to advise on new system for cannabis.

The final report includes more than **80 recommendations.**

Guiding Principles

- *Precautionary approach* - start restrictive; monitor and adapt
- *Public health* - reduce harms and risks of use
- *Public safety* - focus on serious offences, enforceability



Proposed legislation – Bill C-45

On April 13, 2017, Bill C-45 (the **Cannabis Act**) was introduced in the House of Commons by the Minister of Justice.

The Act would use federal criminal law power to create a strict framework to control and regulate the production, distribution, sale and possession of cannabis.

The Cannabis Act proposes:

- many rules that would protect youth from accessing cannabis
- offences targeting those acting outside the legal framework, such as those involved in organized crime

Penalties would be set in proportion to the seriousness of the offence.

- Sanctions would range from warnings and tickets for minor offences to criminal prosecution and imprisonment for more serious offences.

Proposed legislation – Bill C-45 (cont.)

Federal, provincial and territorial governments would all have roles under the new system.

The federal government would:



- license and set strict requirements for producers who **grow and manufacture** cannabis



- set industry-wide **rules and standards**, such as:
 - types of cannabis products that will be allowed for sale
 - prohibiting the use of certain ingredients
 - restrictions on promotional activities

Proposed legislation – Bill C-45 (cont.)

The provinces and territories would license and oversee the **distribution and sale** of cannabis, subject to federal conditions.

They could also:



- increase the minimum age in their province or territory (but not lower it)
- lower the personal possession limit
- create additional rules for growing cannabis at home, such as lowering the number of plants per residence
- restrict where adults can consume cannabis, such as in public or in vehicles

Proposed legislation – Bill C-45 (cont.)

Protecting Youth

Two **new criminal offences** with maximum penalties of 14 years in jail for:

- giving or selling cannabis to any person **under the age of 18**, and
- using a youth to commit a cannabis-related offence

The Act would also **prohibit**:

- products that are appealing to youth
- packaging or labelling cannabis in a way that makes it appealing to youth
- selling cannabis through self-service displays or vending machines
- promoting cannabis, except in circumstances where the promotion is factual and could not be seen by a young person

Proposed legislation – Bill C-45 (cont.)

Other features

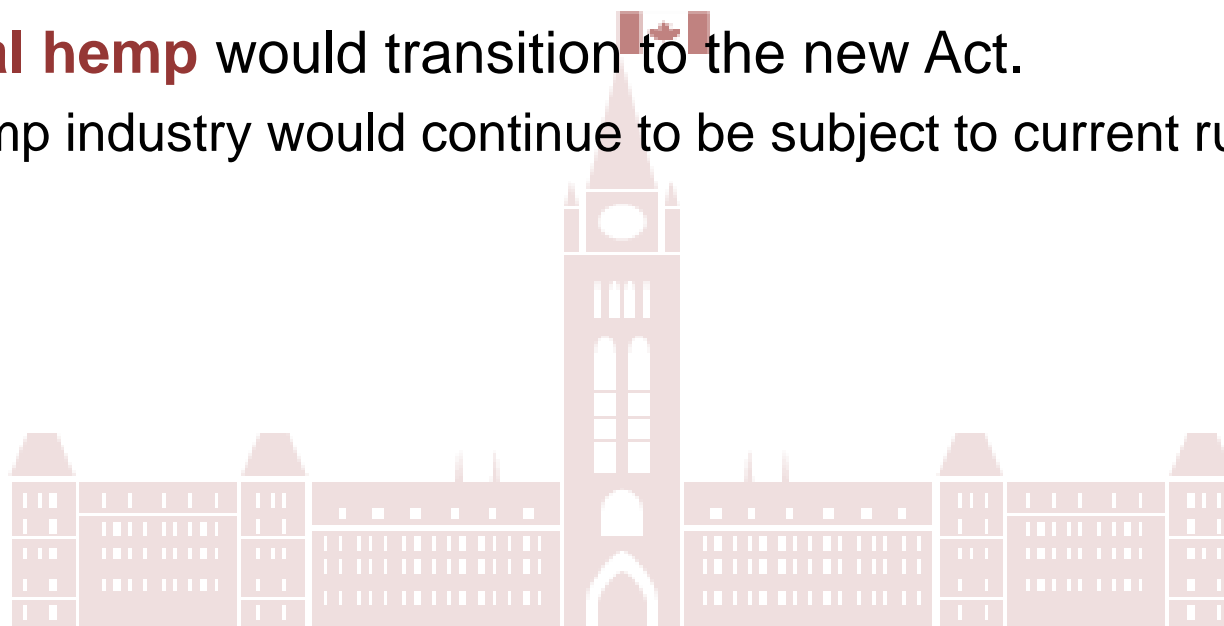
Access to **cannabis for medical purposes** would be maintained.

It would be illegal to **import or export** except for:

- medical and scientific purposes
- industrial hemp

Industrial hemp would transition to the new Act.

- hemp industry would continue to be subject to current rules



Proposed legislation – Bill C-45 (cont.)

Subject to approval by Parliament, the Act would come into force **no later than July 2018**.

At that time, adults who are **18 years or older** would be able to legally:

purchase dried or fresh cannabis and cannabis oil from a provincially-licensed retailer



Other products, such as edibles, would be made available for purchase once appropriate rules for their production and sale are developed

In those provinces that do not have a regulated retail framework, individuals would be able to purchase cannabis online from a federally-licensed producer

Proposed legislation – Bill C-45 (cont.)

Should the Cannabis Act become law in July 2018, adults who are **18 years or older** would be able to legally:



possess up to 30 grams of legal dried cannabis or equivalent in non-dried form

share up to 30 grams of legal cannabis with other adults



grow up to 4 cannabis plants, up to a maximum height of 100cm, per residence for personal use from legal seeds or seedlings

make cannabis products, such as food and drinks, at home provided that organic solvents are not used

Data and Monitoring: Measuring the Impact

Proactive data collection, monitoring, surveillance and analysis **prior** and **after** legalization will be valuable for **policy development** and monitoring the **health and safety impacts**.

Canada is engaged in a number of surveillance and research activities:

- Development and implementation of a core and expanded set of baseline data indicators
- Canadian Cannabis Survey
- Canadian Surveillance System for Poison Information
- Development of a National Drugs Observatory
- Development of a National Research Agenda on cannabis for non-medical purposes

Budget 2017 committed **\$9.6 million** to **public awareness campaign** to inform Canadians, especially youth, of the health and safety risks of cannabis consumption, and to **surveillance activities**.

Public Education and Awareness Activities

Work has begun, with social media activities delivering **credible, consistent, evidence-informed messages** to:

- raise awareness of health and safety risks, especially for youth
- provide advice to parents for talking with their teens
- inform the public of the dangers of drug impaired driving
- convey what is legal and what is not (and when)

The image shows a Facebook post from the page 'Healthy Canadians'. The post features a poll with the question: 'What are your tips to talk to teens about DRUGS?'. Below the question is a lightbulb icon with a checkmark inside. The background of the poll is a photograph of two young women smiling and talking outdoors. The post has 8 likes, 4 shares, and 3 comments. The comments are:

- Karl Heinz: My Dad always told us kids that if we were going to drink or do drugs, we shouldn't sneak it behind his back but bring it home and he would join us. (1 Like, 1 Reply, 27 March at 18:05)
- Ashley Elizabeth: I wouldn't wait for teen years in this day & age. (2 Likes, 1 Reply, 17 March at 08:27)
- Healthy eating tips: thank you (1 Like, 1 Reply, 21 March at 21:27)

At the bottom of the image, there is a blue banner with the text 'CANADA.CA/HEALTH' on the left and the 'Canada' logo on the right.

Engagement and Collaboration

The design, implementation and evaluation of the new framework requires engagement and collaboration with a diverse and informed community.





Next steps

- Over the coming months, Bill C-45 (the Cannabis Act) and Bill C-46 (on drug- and alcohol-impaired driving) will be debated in both the House of Commons and the Senate, and studied by Parliamentary committees.
- Work on regulations to support the proposed Cannabis Act:
- The results of the Canadian Cannabis Survey will be released in fall 2017.
- Public education and awareness activities will continue.

Thank You

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