

New study shows increasing number of Americans using marijuana

Written by Australian Business

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Article provided by The Law Office of Gustavo E. Frances, P.A. Visit us at <http://www.lauderdaleddefense.com>

In recent years, attitudes toward marijuana use have seemingly started to change across the United States. While some states have decriminalized the possession of small quantities of marijuana, others have started to take steps to reduce the penalties associated with a marijuana possession conviction. At the same time, marijuana use has increased across the country.

According to a recent survey conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, over 7 percent of Americans over the age of 12 used marijuana on a regular basis in 2012. In 2007, the same study revealed that approximately 5.8 percent of people over the age of 12 in the United States used marijuana on a regular basis.

The study involves approximately 70,000 people 12 years or older across the United States. In total, the researchers involved were able to determine that approximately 9 percent of the American population -- or 24 million people -- use controlled substances of some type. Of all the different types of drugs used, marijuana continues to be the most common across the country.

Fight marijuana charges in Florida

When someone faces marijuana charges, it is critical that they know the potential penalties in their state and take action to achieve the best possible outcome.

In Florida, the penalties for marijuana possession will depend on whether the individual has previous convictions and the quantity of the substance found on the individual.

For instance, if someone is found with 20 grams of marijuana or less, he or she may face misdemeanor charges. A conviction could lead to up to one year in jail and a fine of up to \$1,000. The penalties are more severe if the individual is found with over 20 grams of

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marijuana. In such cases, he or she may face felony charges, with a conviction leading to up to five years in jail and a fine of up to \$5,000.

In addition, individuals who are convicted of a marijuana crime in Florida will have their driver's license suspended for two years and may be ineligible for financial aid.

If an individual is convicted of a marijuana offense for the first time, he or she may be able to participate in a diversion program. Diversion programs typically last from six to 12 months. Upon successful completion of the terms of the diversion program, the criminal charges against the individual are dropped, allowing him or her to avoid establishing a criminal record.

Those charged with drug crimes must be diligent about protecting their rights. For instance, those charged with first-time drug offenses in Broward County are currently being sent to drug court, where they lose the opportunity to get discovery, take depositions and confront witnesses.

When first arriving in drug court, you will be told how great drug court is and how the charges will be dismissed if you follow their rules. What they do not tell you is the amount of time and effort it will take for you to complete this. They also do not tell you that you have the right to leave drug court and explore your options to fight the case. You have the right to confront the police officer and to be sure that he or she followed the law and did not violate your rights. The current drug court judge in Broward County has stated that she will allow anyone who opts out of drug court to investigate their case to come back to drug court if they want. You do not have to waive all of your rights to get the drug court benefit. At this time, you can leave to see if you can beat the case, and if all else fails, you can return.

The State Attorney in Broward County also offers a three-month diversion program that is easier than drug court. The speaker in court will make you feel that this is not the way to go and that it is hard. This is simply not true. If you can stay clean for three months, pay the fees, and do any class or community service they ask you to do, you will have the charges dismissed in three months.

As the penalties can be harsh for those charged with marijuana crimes in Florida, seeking the advice of a skilled criminal defense attorney is a wise step to ensure a strong defense is

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established on your behalf.