

Problem Statement

Cannabis is an addictive substance which may harm brain development, mental health, the heart, and the lungs (CDC, 2018). An estimated **one in ten people who use cannabis will become addicted, rising to one in six among people who begin using before the age of 18** (CDC, 2018). The U.S. Surgeon General (2019) has emphasized that cannabis use among young people is not safe and marks long term impacts on brain development. This data brief describes the use of cannabis among Montana high school students.

According to the 2019 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey, the self-reported current **use of cannabis (i.e., past 30-days) among Montana high school students was 21% and has remained about the same since 2009** (Figure 1). Current cannabis use among American Indian/ Alaskan Native students (29%) was greater than non-Hispanic white students (20%) or students of other racial or ethnic backgrounds (22%). Current cannabis use increased in prevalence with progressing grade levels (Figure 2).

In 2019, the counties with the highest proportion* of high school students reporting cannabis use within the past 30 days were **Hill (40%), Roosevelt (32%), and Lewis & Clark (30%)**, and the counties with the lowest reportable prevalence occurred in **Carbon (9%), Toole (10%), and Chouteau (11%)** (Figures 3 and 4).

* Estimates not available for all counties because of low numbers or response rates; data are reported for counties with sufficient data only.

Effective Strategies

For parents:

- Visit ParentingMontana.org for parenting tools to support your child's success at all ages.
- Begin talking with your child in an honest and open way when they are in late elementary and early middle school (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2019).
- Set clear expectations for your child regarding the use of cannabis and other substances, remain actively involved in your child's life, and model responsible behavior. For more tips visit <http://LearnAboutMarijuanaWA.org/Parents.htm> (Walker & Haggerty, 2017).

For providers:

- Utilize SBIRT to provide screening and interventions to identify at risk patients and refer them to the resources they need (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2017a).
- Educate parents and teens about the risks of using cannabis and advise parents against using cannabis around their children (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2017b).

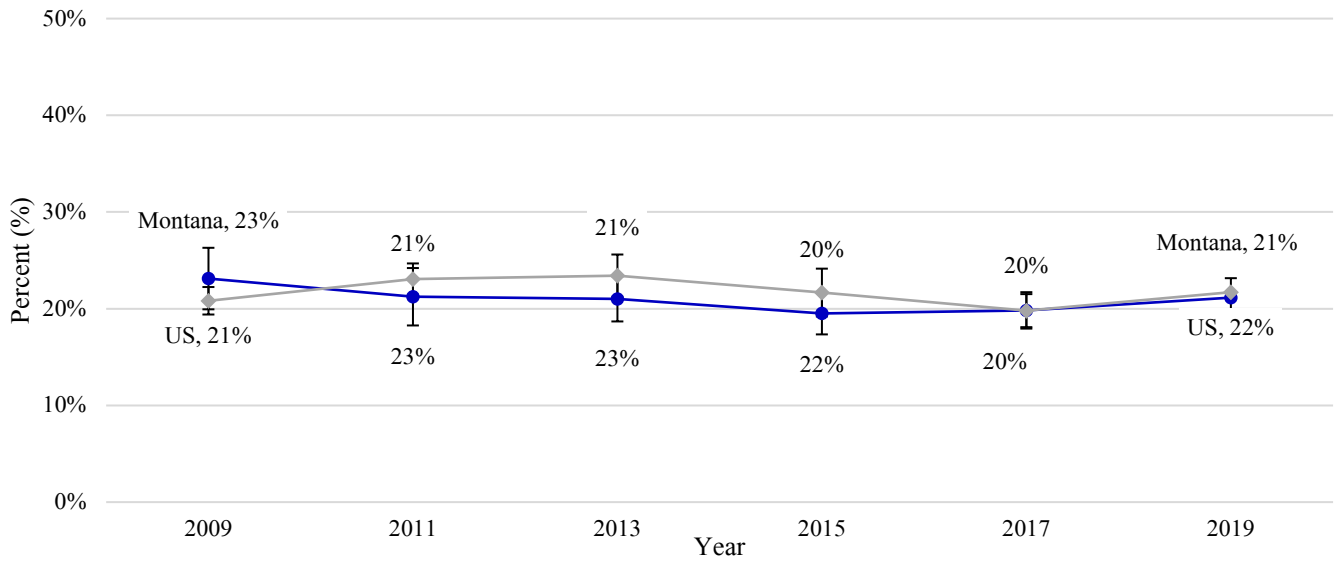
For public health professionals:

- Raise awareness of the impact of cannabis use on individuals, families, and communities (DEA, 2017).
- Engage your local anti-drug coalitions in cannabis use prevention efforts. If your community does not have a coalition, visit www.cadca.org to learn how to start a coalition in your community (DEA, 2017).

Methods

Data in this report were obtained from the 2009-2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), a survey of high school students in grades 9-12. Youth cannabis use was defined as students who reported using cannabis at least once within the past 30 days. State-level data were weighted to represent all high school students in Montana. County-level data were not weighted and therefore only represent students who completed the survey.

Figure 1. Cannabis use* by Year, Grades 9-12, Montana and US, 2009-2019

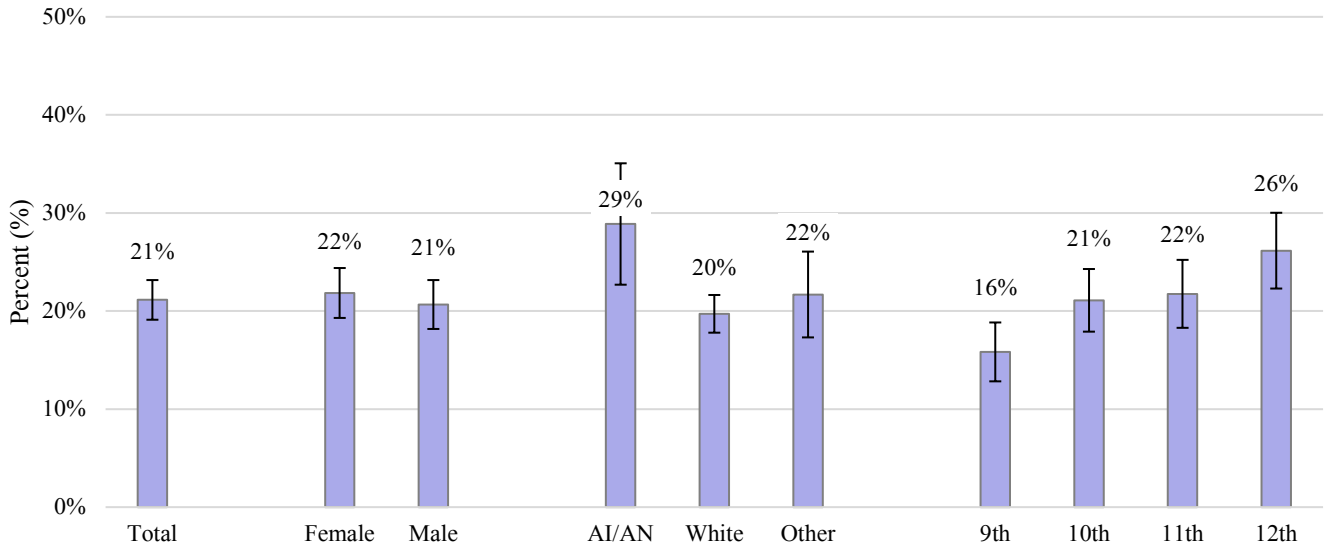


*Percent of high school students who used cannabis at least once in the past 30-days. May include prescribed use.

Sources: Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2009-2019; National Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2009-2017.

Note: Brackets around reported percentages are 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 2. Cannabis use, by Gender, Race, and Grade Level, Grades 9-12, Montana, 2019



*Percent of high school students who used cannabis at least once in the past 30-days. May include prescribed use.

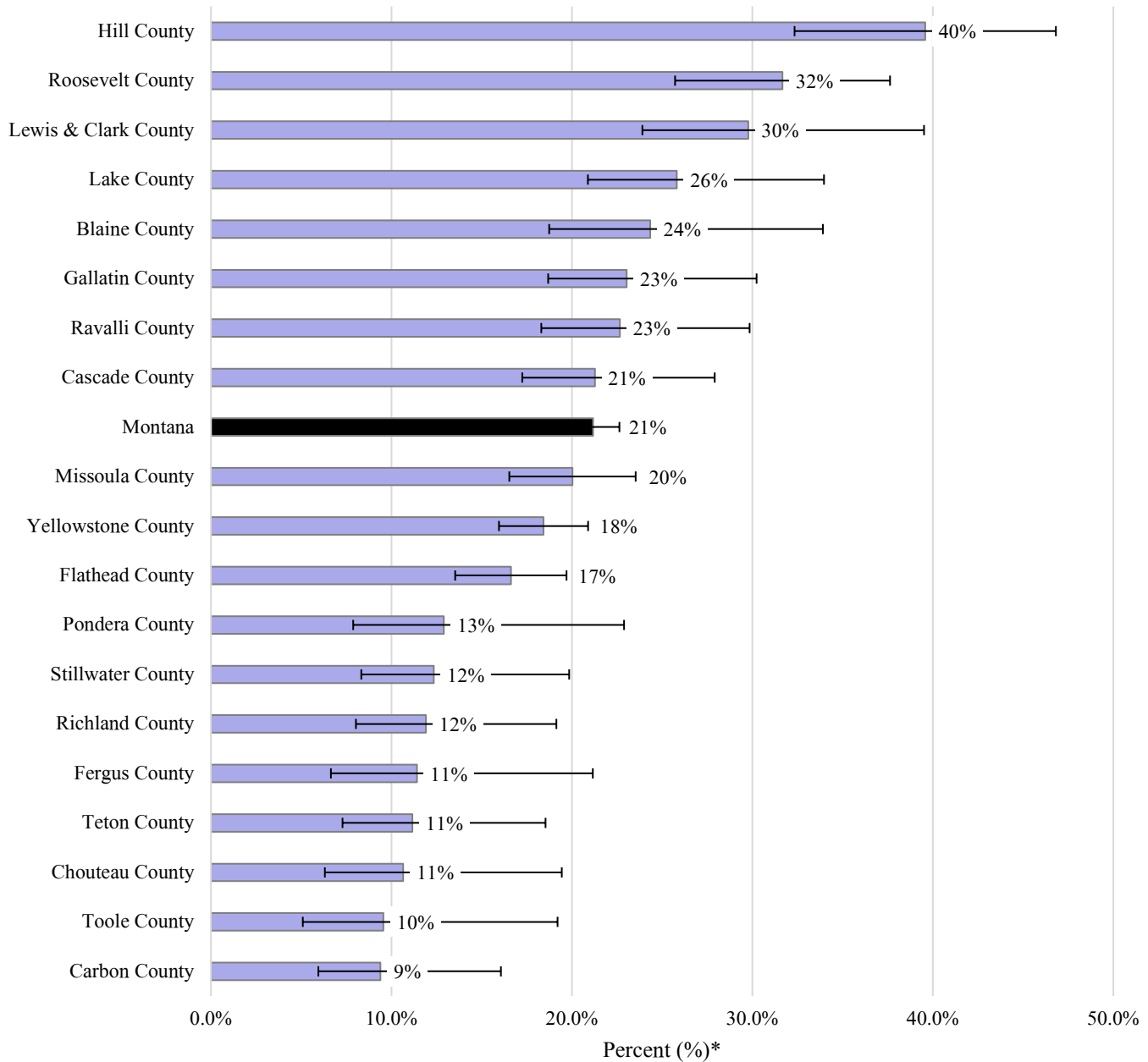
Note: Brackets around reported percentages are 95% confidence intervals.

AI/AN: single race non-Hispanic American Indian/ Alaska Native students.

White: single race non-Hispanic white students.

Other: students with racial or ethnic profiles not defined herein as AI/AN or white.

Figure 3. Cannabis use by County, Grades 9-12, Montana, 2019



*Percent of high school students who used cannabis at least once in the past 30-days. May include prescribed use. Not all counties are listed. Estimates of missing counties not available because of low numbers or response rates. Note: Brackets around reported percentages are 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 4. Cannabis use by County, Grades 9-12, Montana, 2019

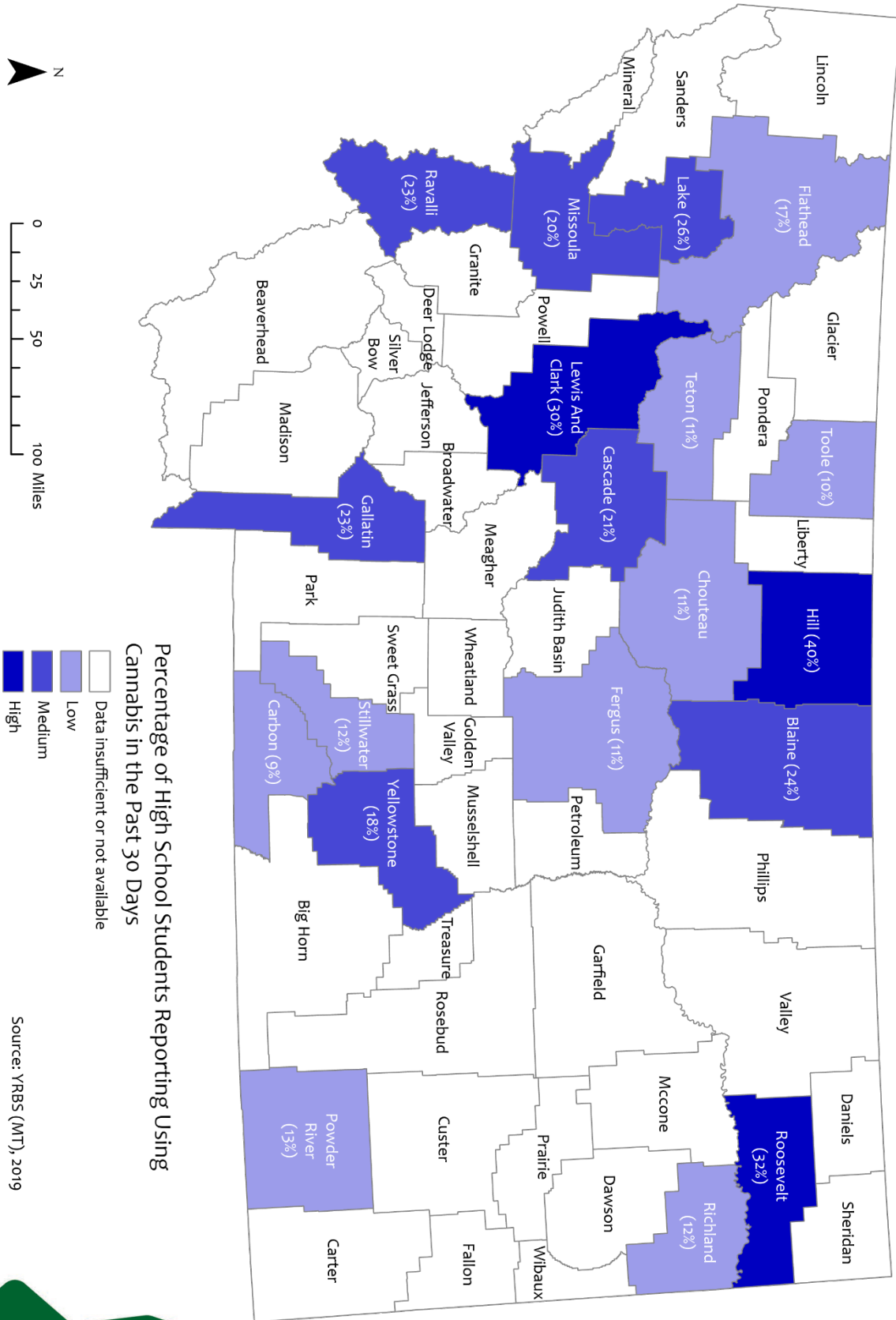
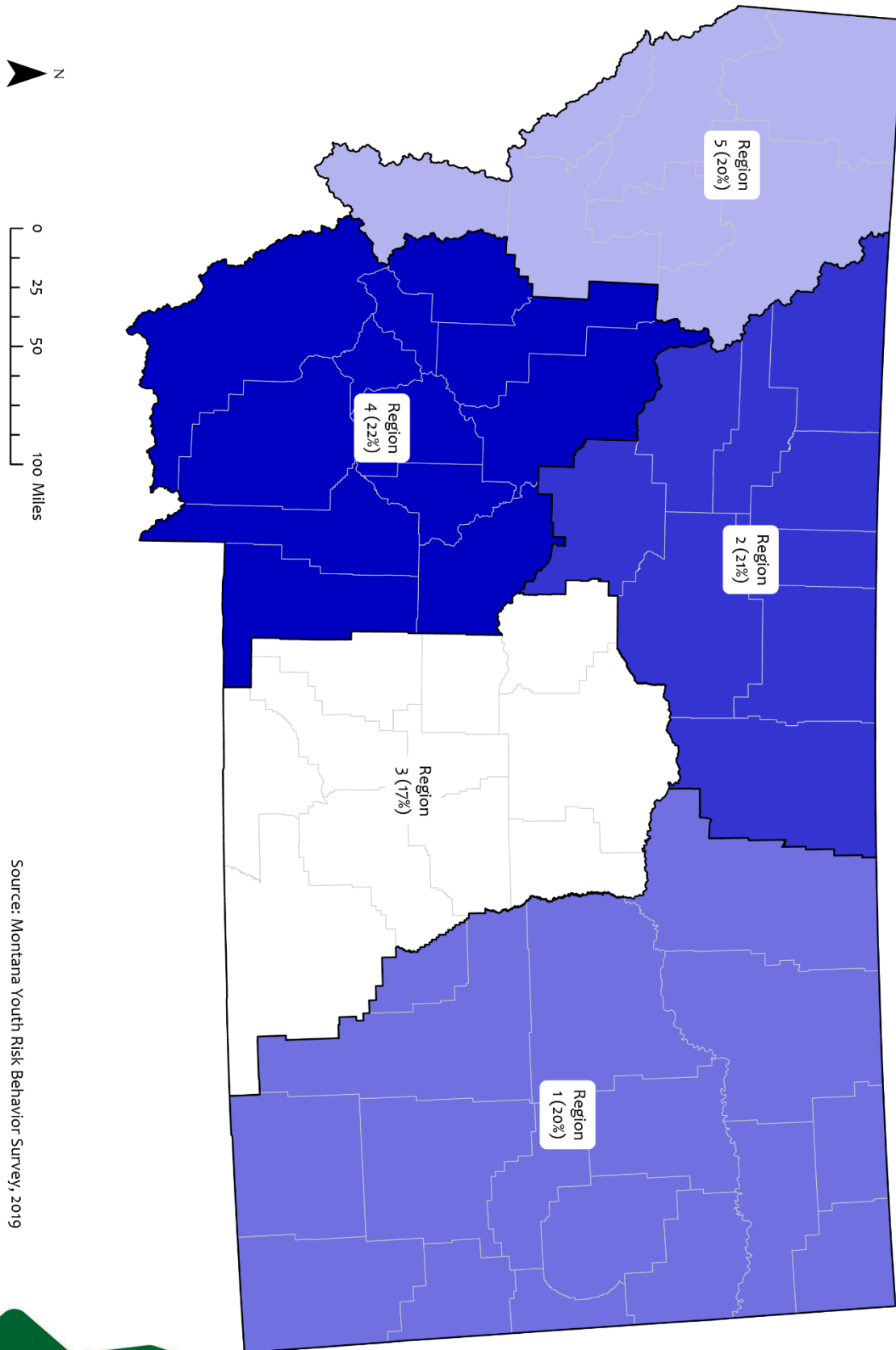
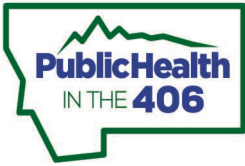


Figure 5. Cannabis use by Region, Grades 9-12, Montana, 2019



Source: Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2019



References

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