

Medical marijuana a challenge for legal pot states

2 January 2015, by Gene Johnson



In this Tuesday, Dec. 30, 2014, photo, Cannabis City clerk Jessica Mann scans a customer's ID as she rings up a purchase of marijuana at the shop in Seattle. A year into the nation's experiment with legal, taxed marijuana sales, Washington and Colorado find themselves with a cautionary tale for Oregon, Alaska or other states that might follow suit: They're wrestling not with the federal interference many initially feared, but with competition from their own medical marijuana systems or even outright black market sales. (AP Photo/Elaine Thompson)

A year into the nation's experiment with legal, taxed marijuana sales, Washington and Colorado find themselves wrestling not with the federal interference many feared, but with competition from medical marijuana or even outright black market sales.

In Washington, the black market has exploded since voters legalized marijuana in 2012, with legally dubious medical dispensaries opening and some pot delivery services brazenly advertising that they sell outside the legal system.

In Colorado, the number of patients on the [medical marijuana](#) registry went up, not down, since 2012, meaning more marijuana users there can avoid paying the higher taxes that recreational pot

carries.

Officials in both states say they must do more to drive customers into the recreational stores. They're looking at fixing the big tax differential between medical and recreational weed.



In this Tuesday, Dec. 30, 2014, photo, Cannabis City assistant manager Pam Fenstermacher fills in a reader board of current marijuana available at the shop in Seattle. A year into the nation's experiment with legal, taxed marijuana sales, Washington and Colorado find themselves with a cautionary tale for Oregon, Alaska or other states that might follow suit: They're wrestling not with the federal interference many initially feared, but with competition from their own medical marijuana systems or

even outright black market sales. (AP Photo/Elaine Thompson)

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In this Tuesday, Dec. 30, 2014, photo, packaged marijuana is displayed for sale at retail shop Cannabis City in Seattle. A year into the nation's experiment with legal, taxed marijuana sales, Washington and Colorado find themselves with a cautionary tale for Oregon, Alaska or other states that might follow suit: They're wrestling not with the federal interference many initially feared, but with competition from their own medical marijuana systems or even outright black market sales. (AP Photo/Elaine Thompson)



In this Tuesday, Dec. 30, 2014, photo, Cannabis City clerk John Golby, left, helps customers looking over a display case of marijuana products at the shop in Seattle. A year into the nation's experiment with legal, taxed marijuana sales, Washington and Colorado find themselves with a cautionary tale for Oregon, Alaska or other states that might follow suit: They're wrestling not with the federal interference many initially feared, but with competition from their own medical marijuana systems or even outright black market sales. (AP Photo/Elaine Thompson)

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