
Hughes Hubbard & Reed

Cannabis Industry May Face Budding Litigation Risk

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Hughes Hubbard & Reed LLP • A New York Limited Liability Partnership
One Battery Park Plaza • New York, New York 10004-1482 • +1 (212) 837-6000

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June 25, 2025 – On June 17, the peer-reviewed journal Heart, co-published by the British Cardiovascular Society, published a systematic review and meta-analysis by researchers at the University of Toulouse of 24 studies linking the use of cannabis with higher risk of stroke, heart attack, cardiovascular disease and other major adverse cardiovascular events. The 24 studies were undertaken between 2016 and 2023 and involved a total of 432,245,972 patients. The review found that the use of cannabis was associated with a 29% increased risk of acute coronary syndrome, a 20% increased risk of stroke and a 110% increased risk of cardiovascular death. The authors also acknowledged the limitations of their work: The article notes that exposure to cannabis in the included studies was poorly reported, that a significant portion of the included studies had moderate or high risk of bias, that several studies relied on the same data sources, and that the data collection was limited to a seven-year period.

Even so, the review has since been covered in over 100 news stories, including a June 19 New York Times article titled "Marijuana's Links to Heart Attack and Stroke Are Becoming Clearer."

This review is published as the National Survey on Drug Use and Health noted that in 2023, 21.8% of Americans aged 12 or older used marijuana in the previous year. Cannabis is currently legal in 39 states, and legal for recreational use in 24.

With exposure comes litigation risk, and this literature review is likely to catch the attention of the plaintiffs' bar. Given the rising threat of litigation against cannabis manufacturers and sellers, Hughes Hubbard can provide these companies with guidance and strategy informed by our deep experience defending tobacco and other product manufacturers against mass tort claims. Such guidance includes a comprehensive review of product labeling, compliance and policy documents, and insurance coverage in connection with potential litigation.

To learn more about our practice in this area, please contact David Woods.

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David M. Woods



Tyler Bloom

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