

# CANADIANS INDICATE GROWING CONCERN ABOUT ROAD SAFETY AT ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF RECREATIONAL CANNABIS LEGALIZATION, NEW SURVEY FINDS

-- Oct. 17, 2019, marks the one-year anniversary of legalized recreational cannabis nationwide

-- A year after legalization, 71% of Canadians are concerned about its impact on road safety

-- Survey shows Canadians want more to be done to keep roads safe

TORONTO, Oct. 15, 2019 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- A new survey released by Abbott (NYSE: ABT), a global healthcare leader, shows Canadians are growing more concerned over the impact of cannabis on road safety. These results come one year after recreational marijuana became legal nationwide with the implementation of Bill C-45.

According to a recent survey of 1,002 Canadian adults conducted by Atomik Research on behalf of Abbott, almost half of Canadians (46%) do not believe enough is being done to stop drugged driving while 43% of respondents do not believe law enforcement has a reliable way to quickly test a driver at the roadside for being under the influence of drugs.<sup>1</sup>

Additional statistics uncovered from the survey, designed to gauge behaviors and attitudes toward drug-impaired driving and road safety, include:

- One-third of respondents (33%) personally know someone who has "driven an automobile soon after taking drugs"
- Nearly one third of Canadians (30%) have heard someone say: "I drive better when I've smoked marijuana," or similar
- Half of respondents believe that for the majority of DUI arrests, the driver is under the influence of a single drug and alcohol

These findings echo similar themes collected by [CAA national](#) in a recent poll showing that more than one in five Canadians (21%) say they have been a passenger in a vehicle where the driver has ingested marijuana.<sup>2,3</sup>

"Canada deserves a great deal of credit for approving roadside cannabis testing technologies, which give law enforcement an added tool to identify drug-impaired drivers," said Erin Holmes, vice president, Criminal Justice and Technical Writer, Criminal Justice Programs at Responsibility.org, and subject matter expert on alcohol and drug-impaired driving. "However, these survey results affirm that more must be done to educate cannabis consumers about the profound public safety implications to driving while high," said Holmes, who is an alumna of the University of Ottawa.

## Tools and Technology to Keep Roads Safe

Roadside drug testing tools are critical to not only help law enforcement detect drug-impaired drivers but also act as a deterrent and cause a motorist to think twice before getting behind the wheel.

Currently, many law enforcement agencies rely on blood and urine tests to confirm whether a driver has taken drugs. However, blood sample collection can take hours to collect and analyze so it may not offer a true snapshot at the time of the incident or traffic stop.

To help law enforcement detect and deter drug-impaired drivers at the roadside, Abbott developed [SoToxa](#), a handheld device that analyzes a subject's oral fluid to determine if they have recently taken drugs. Approved for use in Canada in July 2019, SoToxa will indicate within minutes whether a driver has recently consumed marijuana.

"Keeping people safe from drug-impaired drivers is an enormous responsibility," said Chris Scoggins, senior vice president, Rapid Diagnostics, Abbott. "Our aim is to lend our voice and expertise to this public health imperative and partner with law enforcement, policy experts, academics, victim advocates, and community leaders to keep the roadways safe."

## ABOUT THE SURVEY

Abbott commissioned unbiased, third-party vendor, Atomik Research to run an online survey of 1,002 adults in Canada. Data were collected between June 21 and 28, 2019.

## ABOUT SOTOXA

SoToxa™, formerly known as the Alere DDS®2 Mobile Test System, is a portable system designed for rapid screening and detection of drugs in oral fluid. SoToxa is able to generate test results in minutes, indicating the presence of amphetamine, benzodiazepines, cannabis (THC), cocaine, methamphetamine, and opiates. In Canada, SoToxa is approved for roadside detection of THC.

In addition, the technology is lightweight, easy to use and built for the rugged and unpredictable nature of a police officer's real-life work environment. Because SoToxa uses oral fluid to screen for the active presence of the parent drug – not the drug's metabolite – it only registers recent usage and will not indicate historical drug usage.

Today, the device is used in countries including the United States, the United Kingdom, Spain, and Germany, where it's also approved to test for cocaine, opiates, amphetamines, methamphetamines and benzodiazepines.

## **ABOUT ABBOTT**

Abbott is a global healthcare leader that helps people live more fully at all stages of life. Our portfolio of life-changing technologies spans the spectrum of healthcare, with leading businesses and products in diagnostics, medical devices, nutritionals and branded generic medicines. Our 103,000 colleagues serve people in more than 160 countries.

## **ABOUT ABBOTT IN CANADA**

Abbott has been present in Canada since 1931 when we established our first business in Old Montreal. Since then, we've been dedicated to helping people live healthier lives through a diverse range of science-based nutritional products, diagnostic tools, and vascular devices.

With nearly 1,500 employees today at our headquarters in Montreal, our Point of Care plant in Ottawa, our Diabetes Care office in Mississauga, and a lactulose manufacturing plant in Victoriaville, Abbott in Canada reflects our dedication to manufacturing the highest-quality products and finding lasting solutions to the unique health challenges facing the country.

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<sup>1</sup> Abbott survey, June 2019

<sup>2</sup> CAA National polling, December 2018

<sup>3</sup> Abbott's survey is not affiliated with surveys and research conducted by CAA

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