



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Rocky Mountain Poison & Drug Safety receives prestigious National Institutes of Health grant to research psychedelic use

**DENVER** (March 17, 2026) — Psychedelic use is rising rapidly across the U.S. for both therapeutic and recreational purposes. As states move to adopt new policies, public health systems are being asked to make decisions without reliable, real-world data on the benefits and risks of these substances.

To address that gap, Rocky Mountain Poison & Drug Safety (RMPDS) has been awarded a grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) to continue research using the National Survey Investigating Hallucinogenic Trends (NSIHT). This innovative research tool has collected the first comprehensive, population level data designed to answer a critical question: How do real-world psychedelic use patterns and policy environments shape health outcomes over time?

NSIHT collects detailed information on more than 17 psychedelics, including reason for use, dose and microdosing patterns, setting, supervision, and whether substances were obtained legally or illicitly. These data are paired with validated measures of health outcomes, emergency department use and mental health indicators. The project will also compare outcomes across states with different psychedelic policies to understand how legalization and decriminalization affect safety and public health.

RMPDS leaders say the new system arrives at a critical moment.

“States, health systems and drug developers are being asked to make major decisions without rigorously collected reliable data,” said Andrew A. Monte, MD, PhD, Associate Director of RMPDS. “NSIHT will finally give policymakers, clinicians and industry the trustworthy real-world



data they need to understand risks, identify safeguards and prepare for the rapid expansion of psychedelic access and provide information to guide safe and effective use.”

Over the next five years, the NIH R01 award will generate national and state level estimates of health outcomes among those who use and those who don’t use psychedelics, identify where risks concentrate under different policy environments, and develop a predictive framework to help states anticipate health care demand, resource needs and other downstream impacts before policy changes take effect.

The NIH R01 is one of the most prestigious and competitive grants in health-related research. It is often considered the gold standard of federally funded research awards because only proposals with the highest scientific merit, rigorous methodology, and strong potential for public health impact are selected. NIH R01 funding supports innovative projects led by investigators who demonstrate exceptional rigor in their fields, making it a major recognition of the strength and importance of this work.

“Receiving an NIH R01 grant is so much more than funding,” said Yael Schenker, Chief Academic Officer at Denver Health. “It’s a vote of confidence from the broader scientific community that a project will have a high impact and the approach to the work is rigorous.”

RMPDS welcomes collaboration with state health departments, drug safety monitoring experts, medical affairs, and policy organizations interested in integrating NSIHT data and RMPDS expertise into their policy assessment framework.

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## **About Denver Health**

[Denver Health](#) is a comprehensive health and hospital system that provides high-quality care and proudly serves as the city’s safety-net hospital. For more than 165 years, Denver Health has been guided by its mission to serve the people of Denver, to educate the next generation of health care professionals and to engage in research and community partnerships to better deliver the services that meet our patients’ health care needs while strengthening our community.



## About RMPDS

[Rocky Mountain Poison & Drug Safety](#) has been serving the public since 1956. Whether it's innovative research in toxicology, progressive solutions in case management, emergency services, or regulatory compliance, Rocky Mountain Poison & Drug Safety is a leader in public health protection.

We work to advance public health and improve access to care by providing knowledge and recommendations through teaching and research – all with the goal of maximizing effectiveness, reducing toxicity, decreasing injury and disease.