



COVID-19 Impact:

The Cannabis Industry

May 2021

 **leaflink**
FOURSQUARE

Project Overview

After the cannabis industry was declared “essential” in spring of 2020 -- as the pandemic took hold across the world -- the industry's growth accelerated, sending cannabis businesses reeling to keep up with changing demand and answer a crucial question:

How has the pandemic impacted cannabis consumers' behaviors?

We believe that by analyzing Foursquare's foot traffic data -- including both in-store purchases and curbside pickups -- alongside LeafLink's wholesale order data, you can gain a holistic perspective on how COVID-19 impacted the cannabis industry.

This report will shed light on how cannabis has grown and shifted throughout the pandemic as well as where things may be headed in the future.



About the Partners

FOURSQUARE

Foursquare is the leading independent location technology platform.

Location is at the center of everything we do: we understand location, how people move through the physical world, and how those patterns change over time.

We use that knowledge and our propriety technologies to help brands, developers, marketers and analysts understand consumers and engage with them.

leaflink

LeafLink is a tech-enabled wholesale marketplace for the cannabis industry that has revolutionized the way brands, distributors, and retailers manage their operations.

LeafLink's e-commerce approach has optimized and fueled the growth of the cannabis industry across 27 markets in the U.S. and Canada, creating new efficiencies in the supply-chain with software and services.

LeafLink's marketplace manages over \$4 billion in annual orders, making up an estimated 39% of U.S. wholesale cannabis commerce.

Methodology

Foursquare analyzes foot traffic data from millions of Americans who make up our first party panel. All data is either anonymized, pseudonymized, or aggregated, and is normalized against U.S. Census data to remove age, gender and geographical bias.

We use indexed foot traffic to demonstrate the relative decline in visits to different types of places, where visits on the first day are 100. We analyze data on a rolling 7-day basis to reduce the effects of foot traffic trends influenced by certain days of the week (for example, bars and clubs experience an uptick on Fridays and Saturdays).

In this joint report, we augment Foursquare's visitation data with wholesale order data from LeafLink. Over \$2.5B of wholesale orders placed through LeafLink in 2020 were used to compile this data.

When we cite "GMV," we are referring to Gross Merchandise Volume on the LeafLink platform. Cannabis stores, or dispensaries, are referred to as "Buyers."



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3 Key Trends from Year One of the COVID-19 Pandemic (2020)

1

Cannabis dispensaries saw slightly less traffic than usual during the COVID-19 pandemic

Dispensary traffic was slightly below pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2020 (down -6% nationally as of December 31st, 2020).

2

Wholesale basket size increased in Q1 2020 and remained higher than that of 2019 throughout the year

From January to March 2020, spend per store grew by +25% month-over-month vs. +15% during the same period in 2019.

3

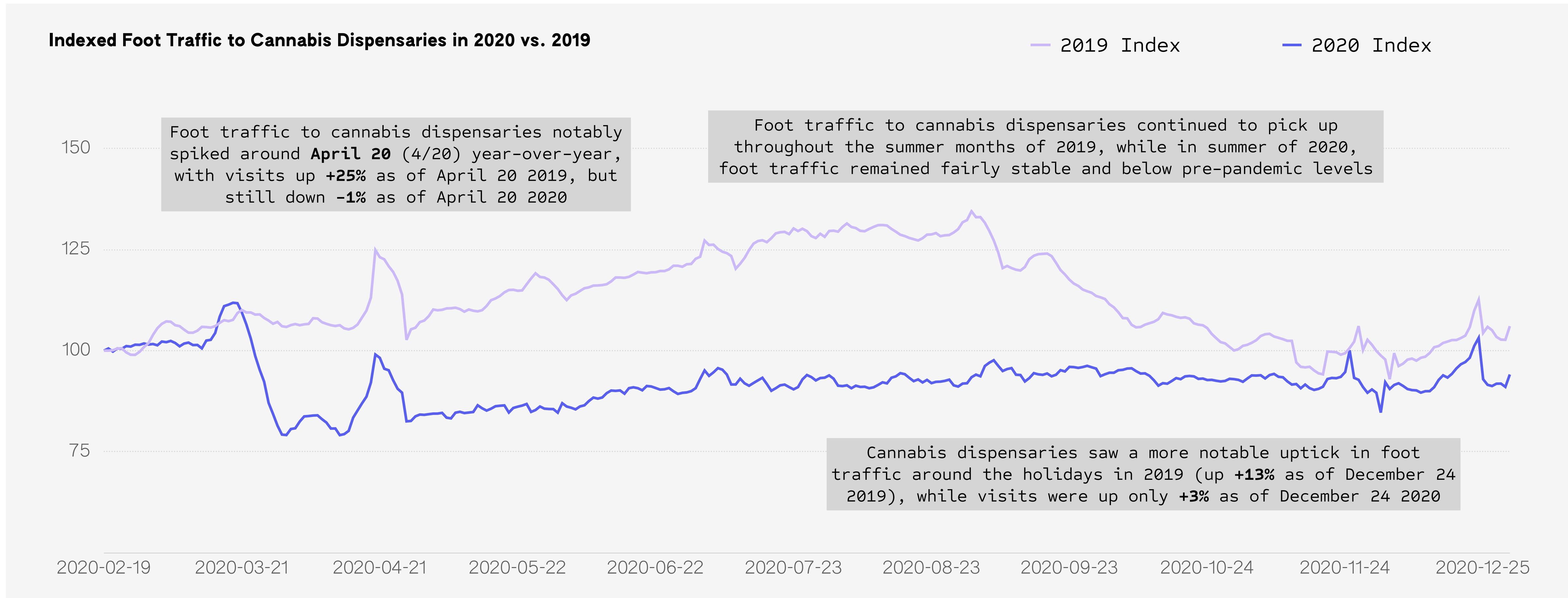
Dispensaries saw a shift in consumer behavior across product categories as a result of the pandemic

Flower, pre-rolls, and concentrates all gained share during the pandemic, while cartridges and edibles declined.

What did foot
traffic to cannabis
dispensaries look
like in 2020?

The pandemic had a negative impact on foot traffic to **cannabis dispensaries**

Foot traffic to cannabis dispensaries was down **-6%** as of December 31 2020 (vs. being up **+6%** as of December 31 2019).



However, in terms of **wholesale transaction volume**, COVID-19 was an accelerator for the cannabis industry

From January to March 2020, Gross Merchandise Volume on LeafLink grew **30%**, exceeding 2019 growth. The industry, as measured by transactions on LeafLink, nearly doubled in 2020.

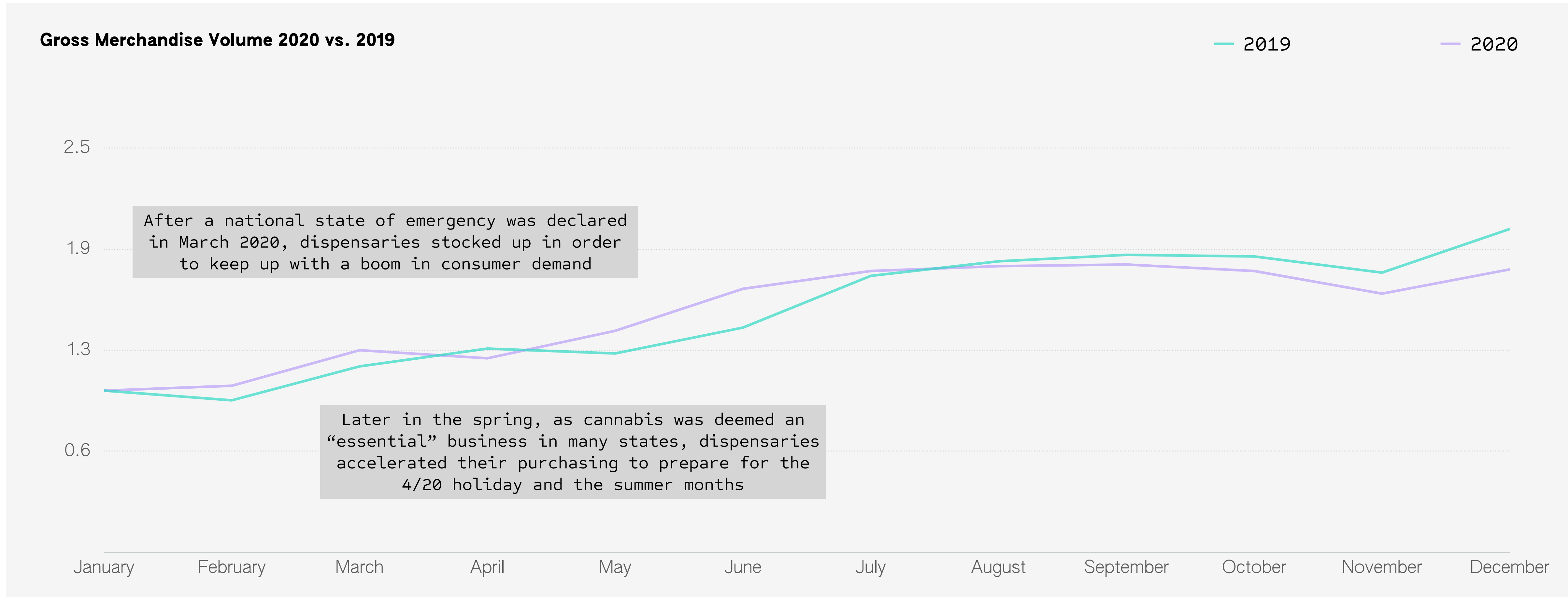


Chart illustrates Gross Merchandise Volume year over year, where 1.0 = gross merchandise volume as of January of a given year.

While rate of purchasing was impacted by COVID-19, **spend per individual buyer increased during** Spring of 2020

Spend per buyer from January to March 2020 was up **+25%** vs. being up only **+15%** during the same period in 2019.

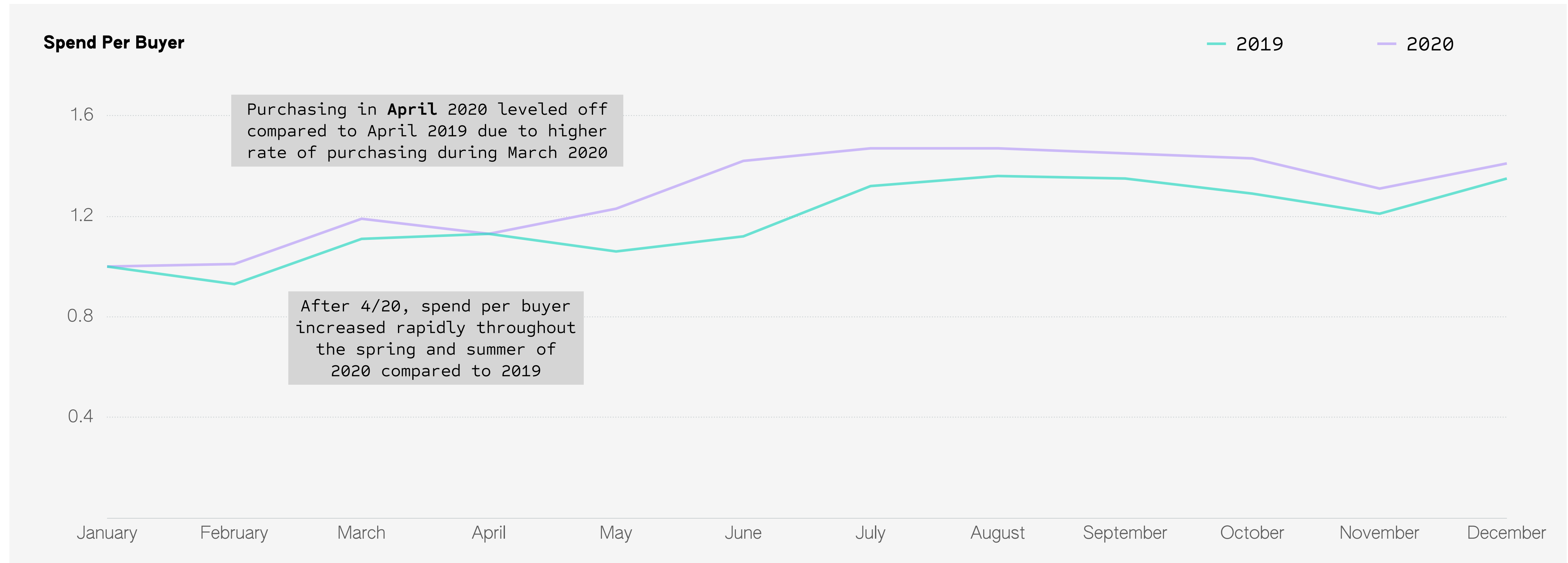
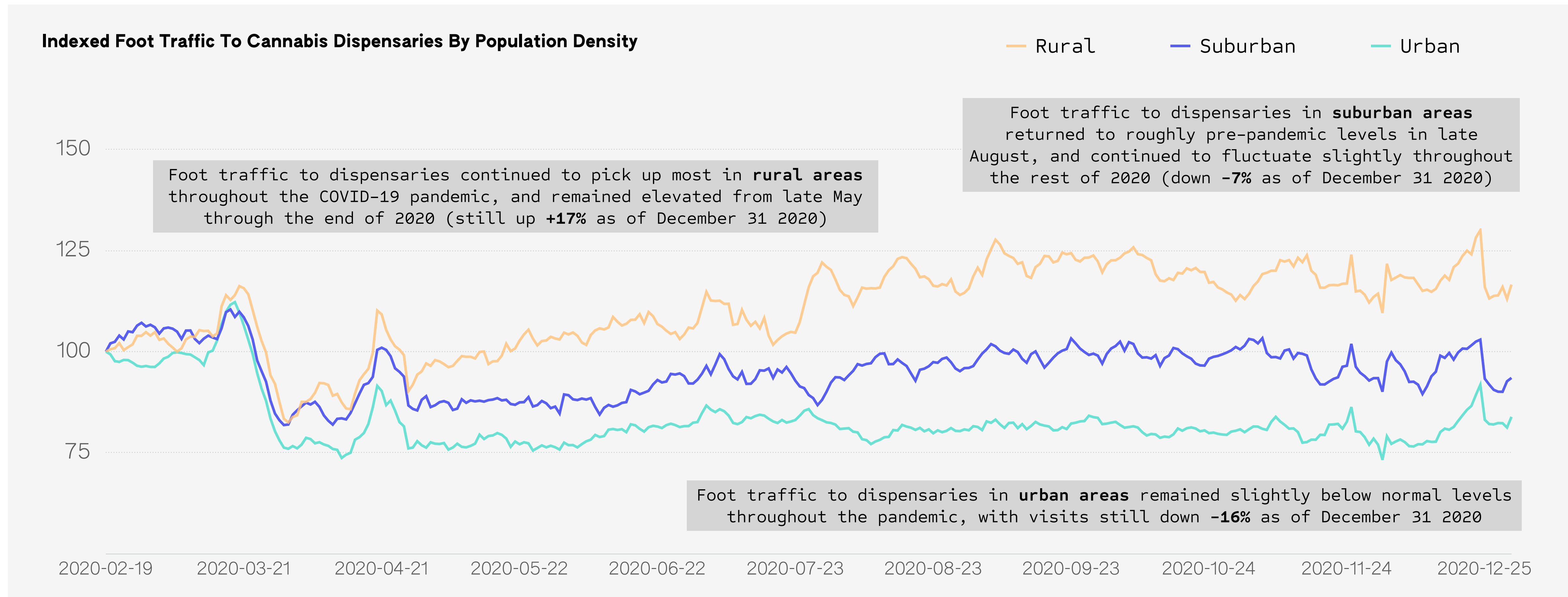


Chart illustrates Gross Merchandise Volume year over year, where 1.0 = gross merchandise volume as of January of a given year. Buyer at the wholesale level is defined as a store or dispensary.

Foot traffic to **cannabis dispensaries** remained elevated in **rural areas** throughout most of 2020

Foot traffic to dispensaries in rural areas was up **+16%** as of December 31 2020, while national traffic was still down **-6%**.



Foot traffic to **cannabis dispensaries** remained elevated in the **Midwest** & **South**, offsetting declines in foot traffic across other regions

Foot traffic to dispensaries picked up most notably in the Midwest during the holidays, and remained up **+44%** as of December 31 2020.

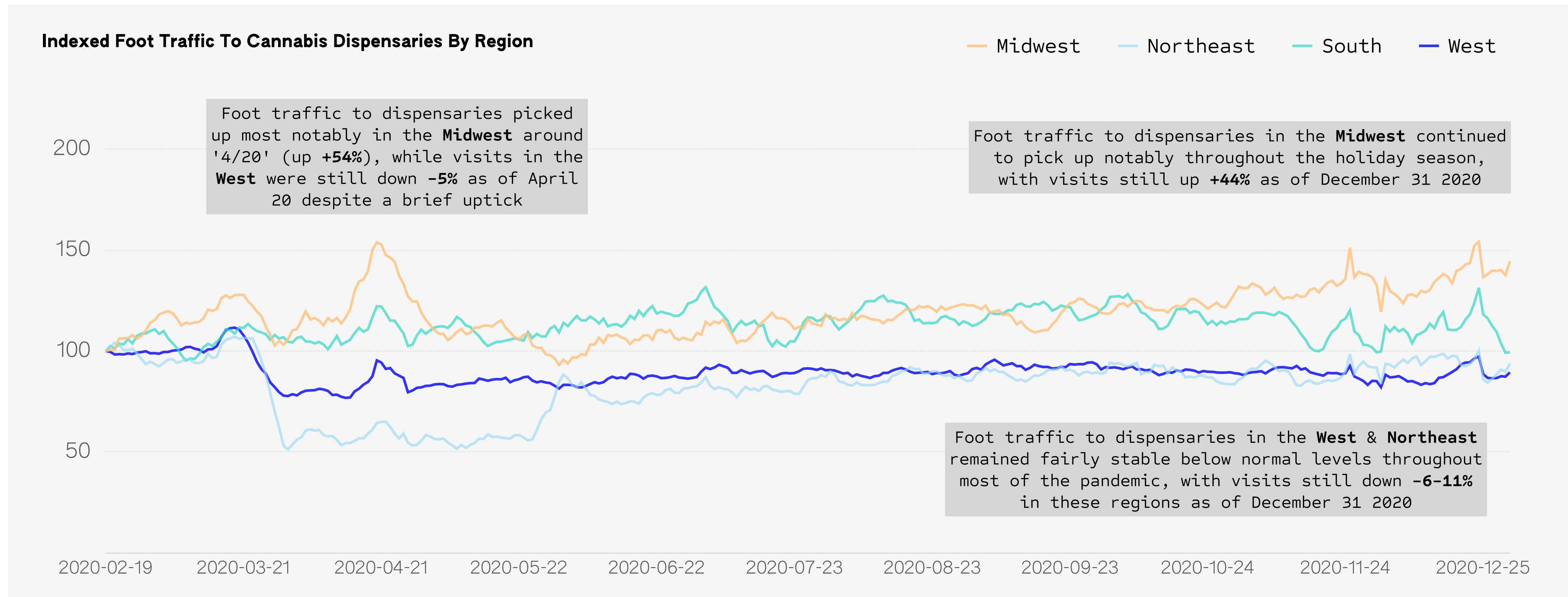


Chart illustrates indexed foot traffic to cannabis dispensaries by region, where visits on February 19, 2020 is 100. We've used rolling 7 day averages to account for fluctuations by day of the week.

Foot traffic to **cannabis dispensaries** picked up most in **Illinois** & **Michigan** throughout the pandemic

Foot traffic to cannabis dispensaries remained mostly elevated in Illinois & Michigan throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

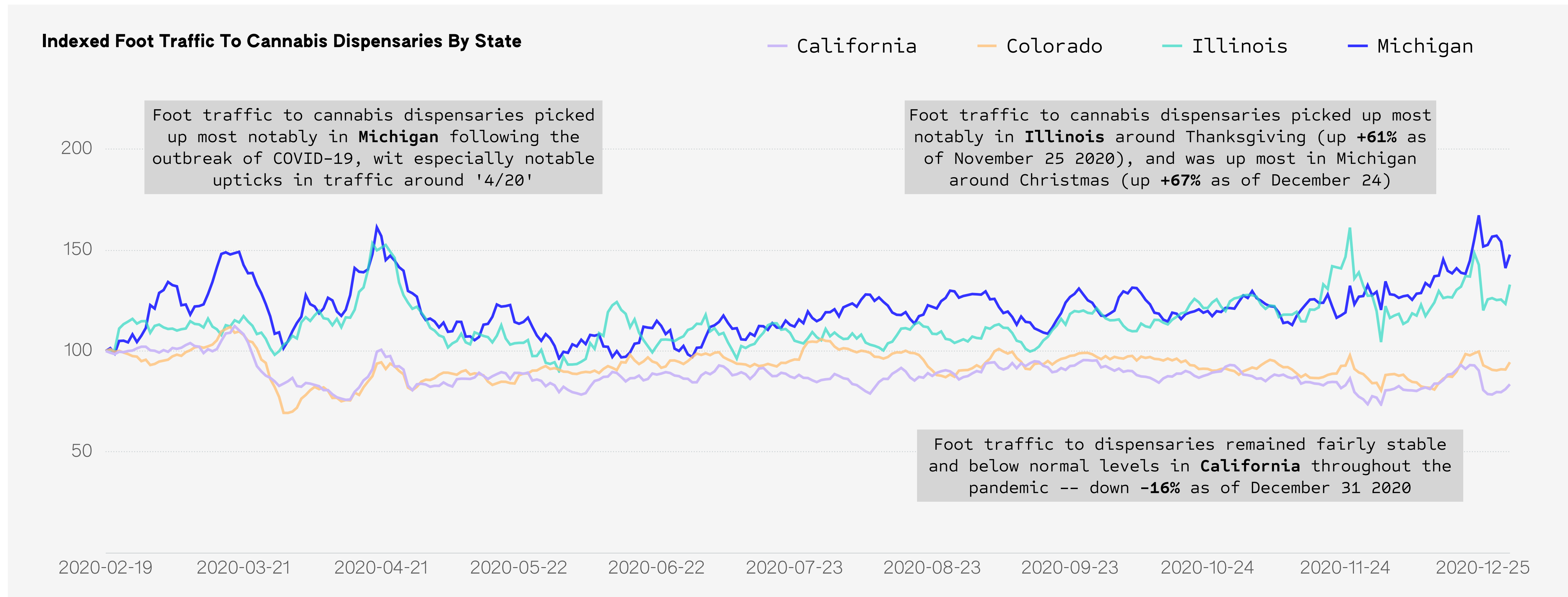


Chart illustrates indexed foot traffic to cannabis dispensaries by State, where visits on February 19th, 2020 is 100. We've used rolling 7 day averages to account for fluctuations by day of the week.

Established **West Coast markets** all saw significant bumps in wholesale GMV as stores stocked up on inventory pre-lockdown

Established West Coast states grew **+33-86%** throughout the pandemic compared to where they started in January 2020.

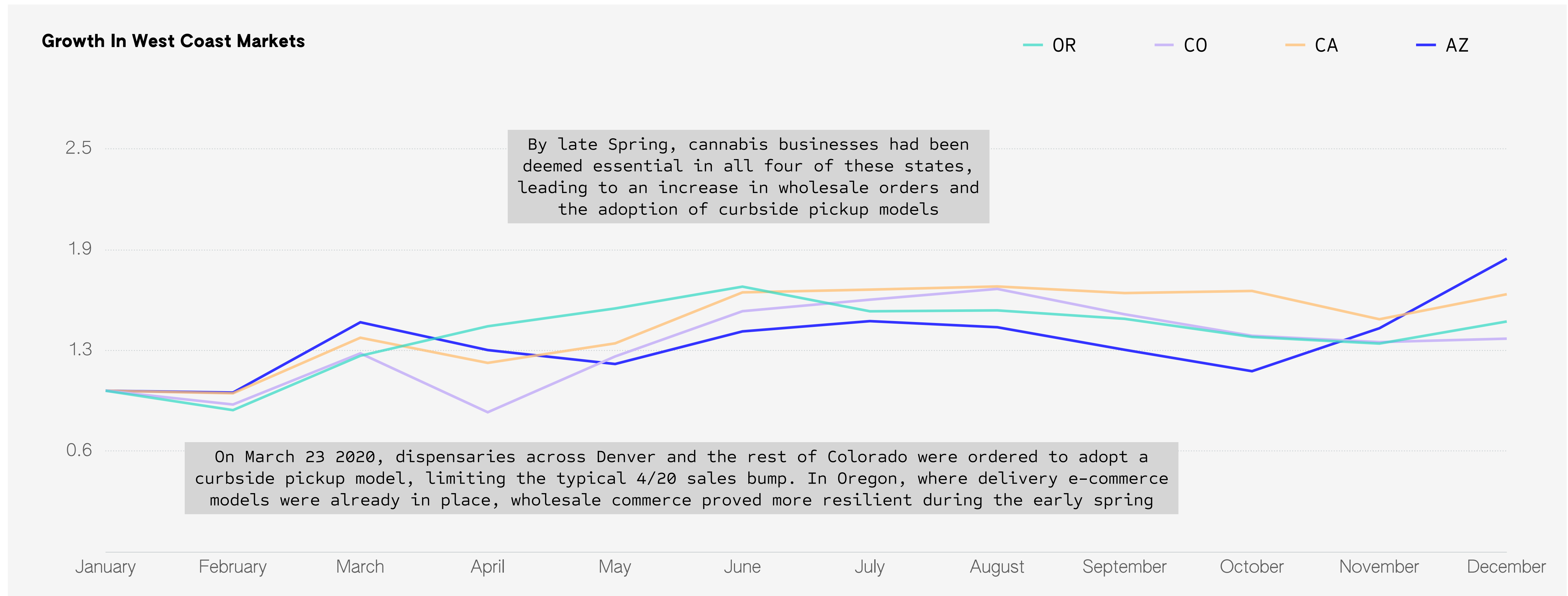


Chart illustrates Gross Merchandise Volume year over year, where 1.0 = gross merchandise volume as of January of a given year.

New markets outside of the West Coast grew exponentially compared to where they were in January 2020

Secular growth themes, regulatory changes and production timelines outweighed headwinds from COVID-19.

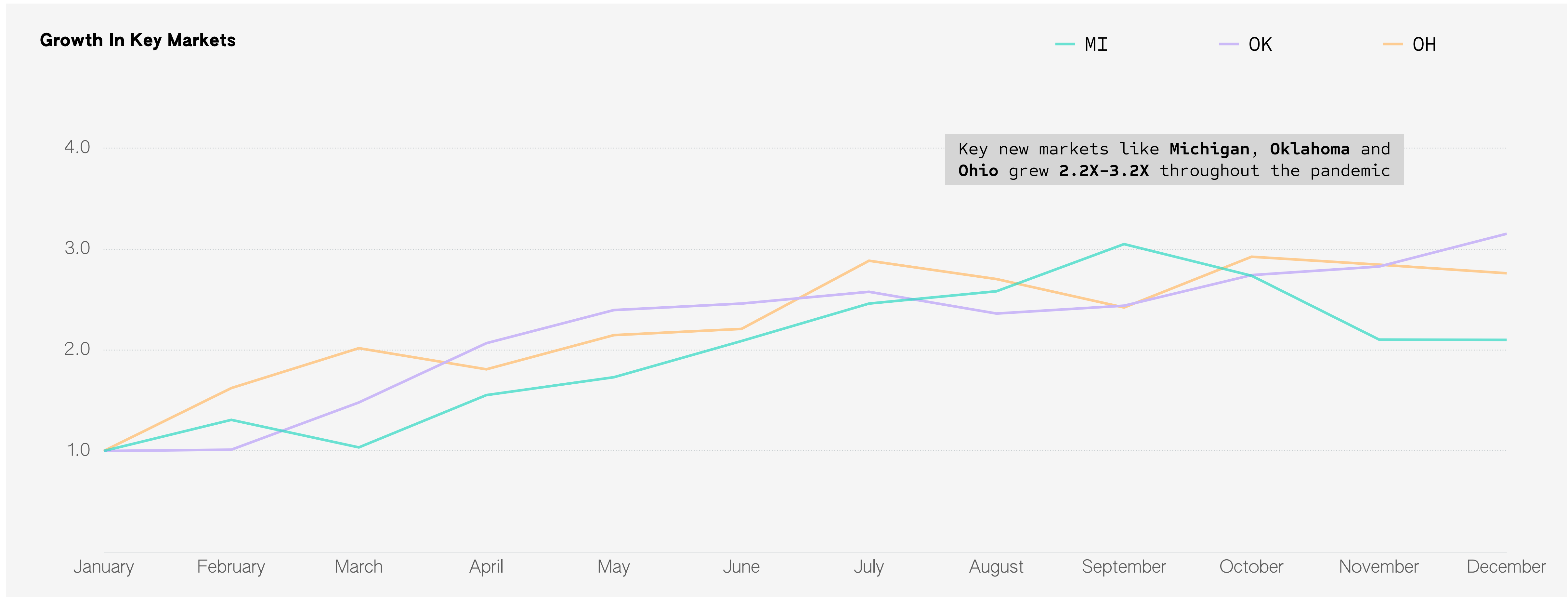
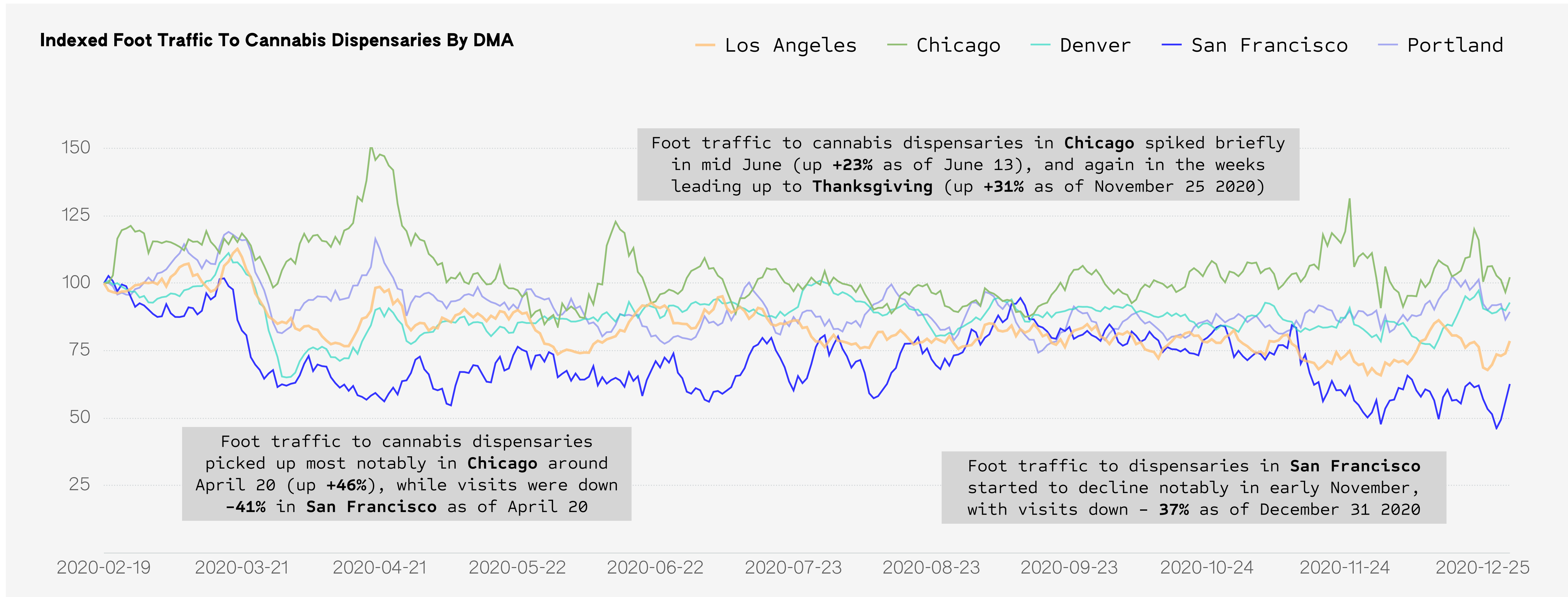


Chart illustrates Gross Merchandise Volume year over year, where 1.0 = gross merchandise volume as of January of a given year.

Foot traffic to **cannabis dispensaries** picked up most in **Chicago** compared to visits in other legal cities throughout the pandemic

Foot traffic to cannabis dispensaries fluctuated by city throughout the pandemic.



Foot traffic to **cannabis dispensaries** picked up most amongst **younger consumers** in 2020

Foot traffic to cannabis dispensaries remained well below pre-pandemic levels amongst consumers ages 65+ throughout 2020.

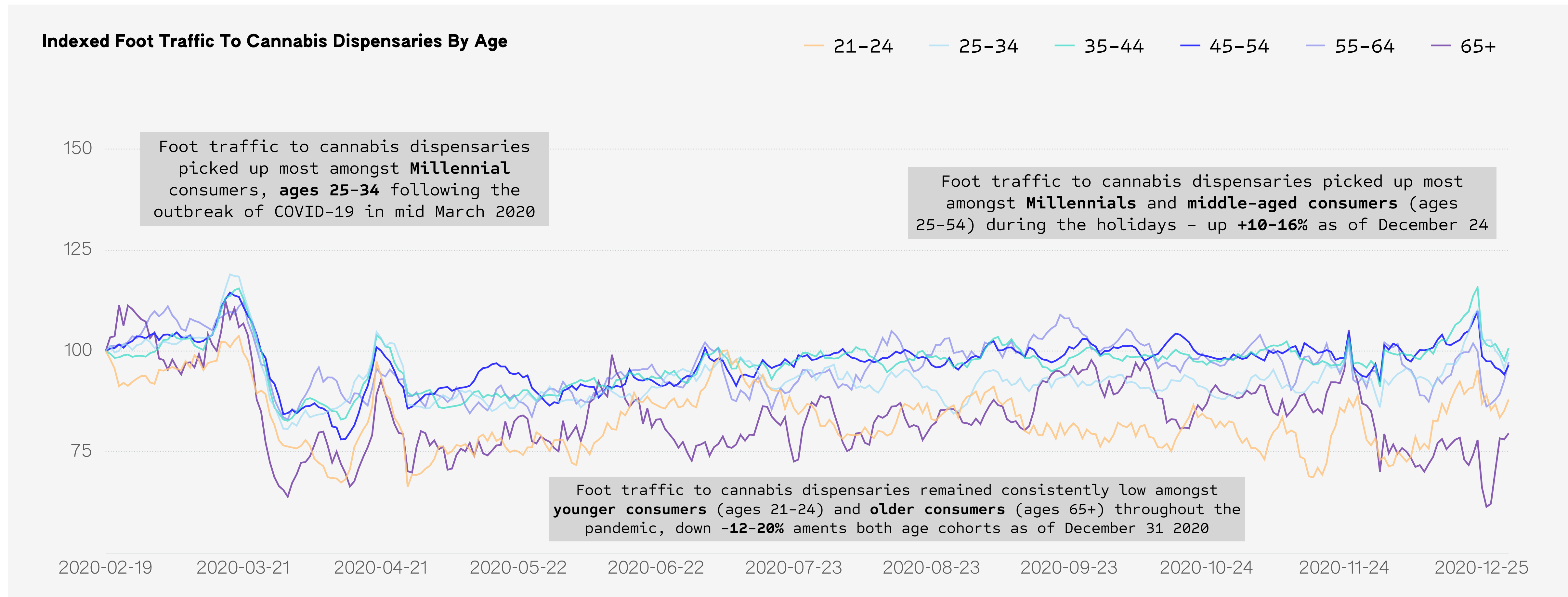
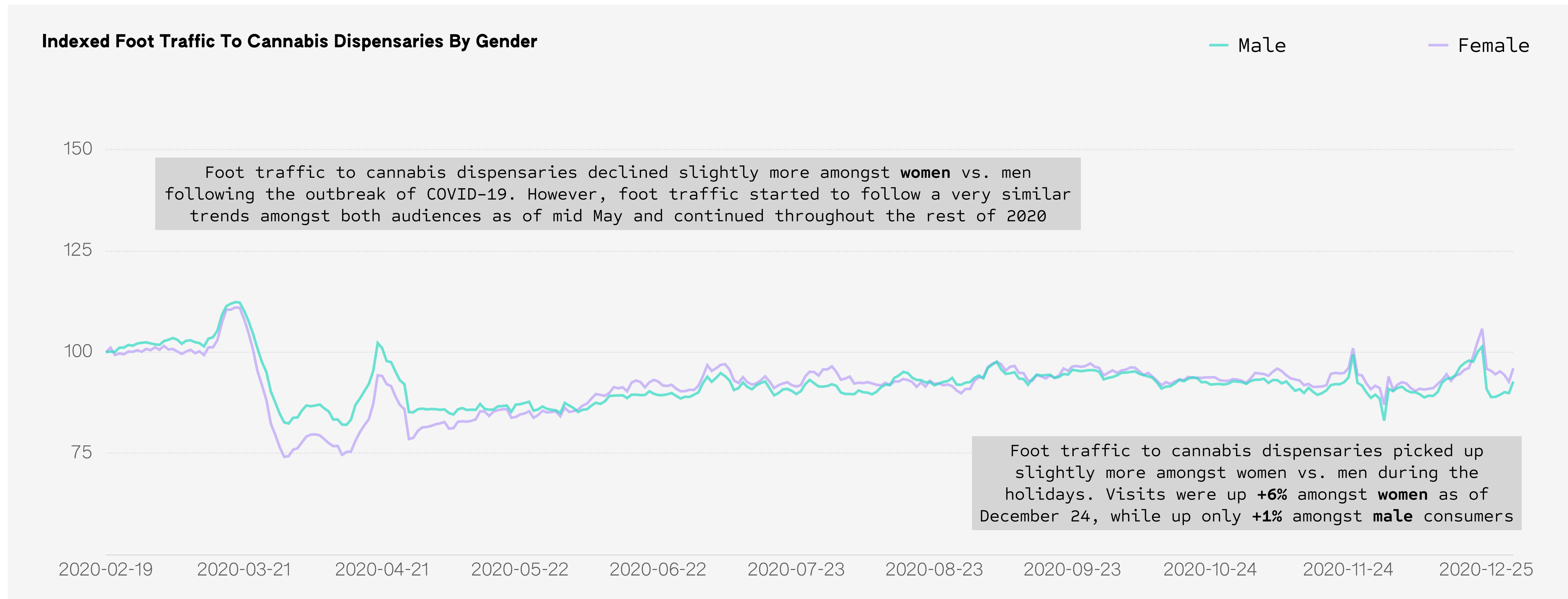


Chart illustrates indexed foot traffic to cannabis dispensaries by age, where visits on February 19, 2020 is 100. We've used rolling 7 day averages to account for fluctuations by day of the week.

Foot traffic to **cannabis dispensaries** picked up slightly more amongst **women** in the final months of 2020

Foot traffic to cannabis dispensaries picked up slightly more amongst women vs. men during the holidays.



How else has the
pandemic impacted
consumer preferences?

Dispensaries saw a shift in consumer behavior across product categories as a result of the pandemic

Flower, pre-rolls, and concentrates gained share while cartridges and edibles lost share.

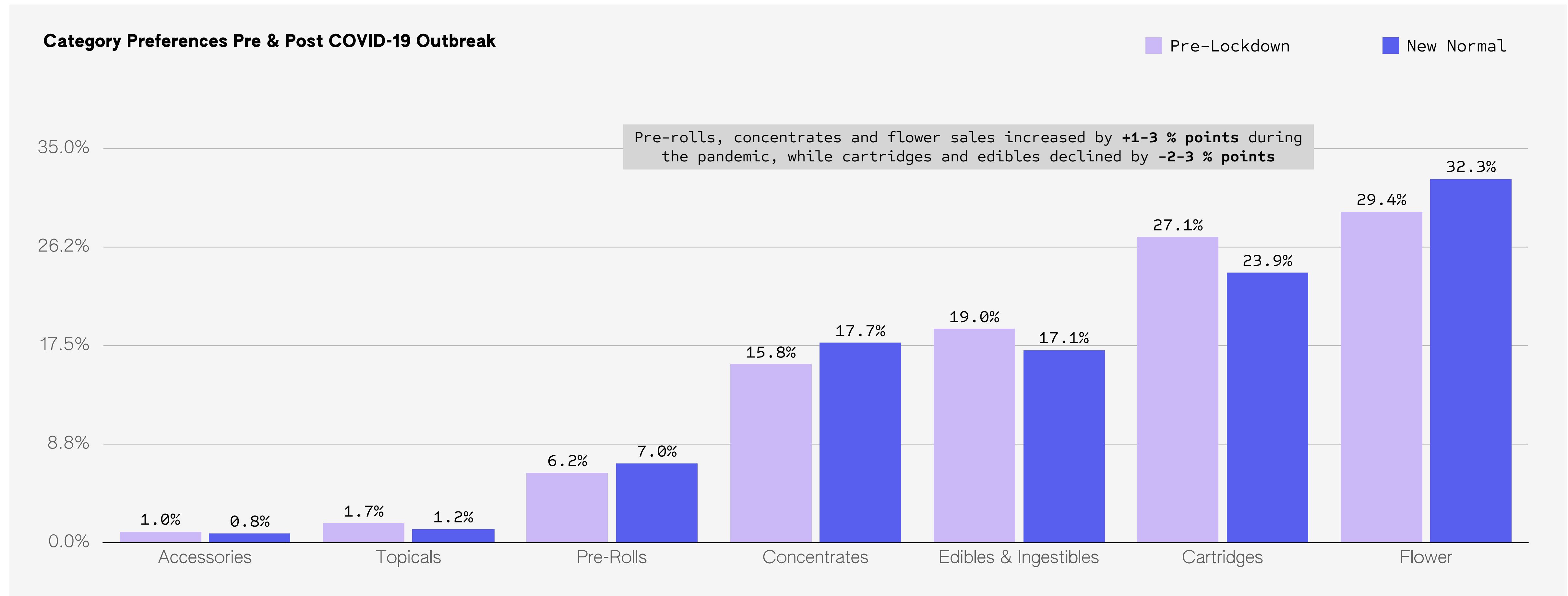


Chart illustrates category preferences based on % of total product sales. Pre-Lockdown period is defined as prior to the week of March 9th. New Normal period is defined as week of April 27th - week of December 31st, 2020.

Flower remains the most dominant product category

Edibles & Ingestibles and concentrates lost market share compared to the same time last year and pre-rolls gained share.

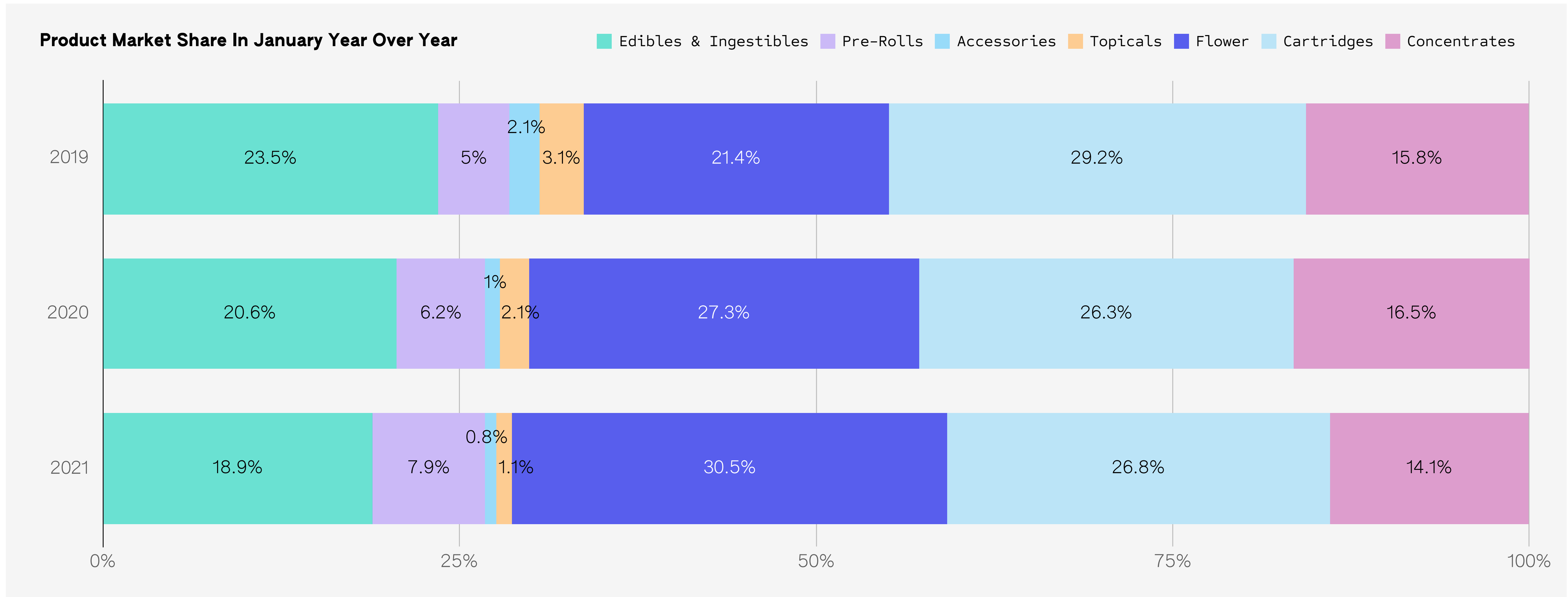
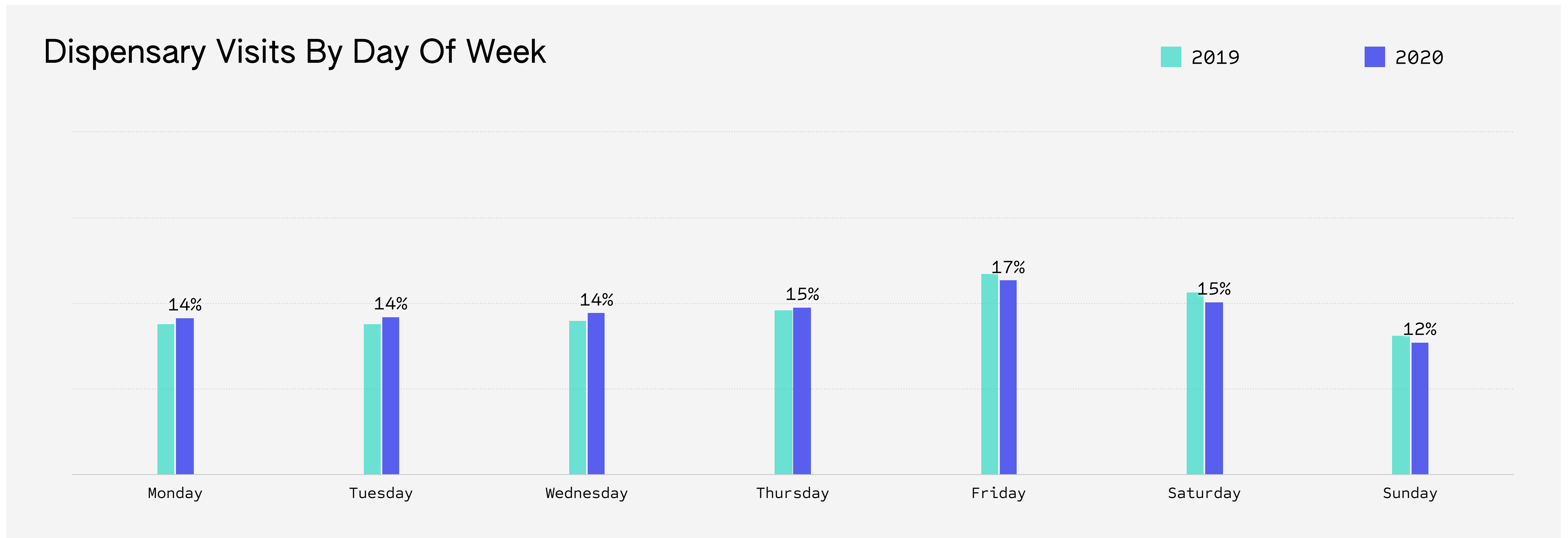


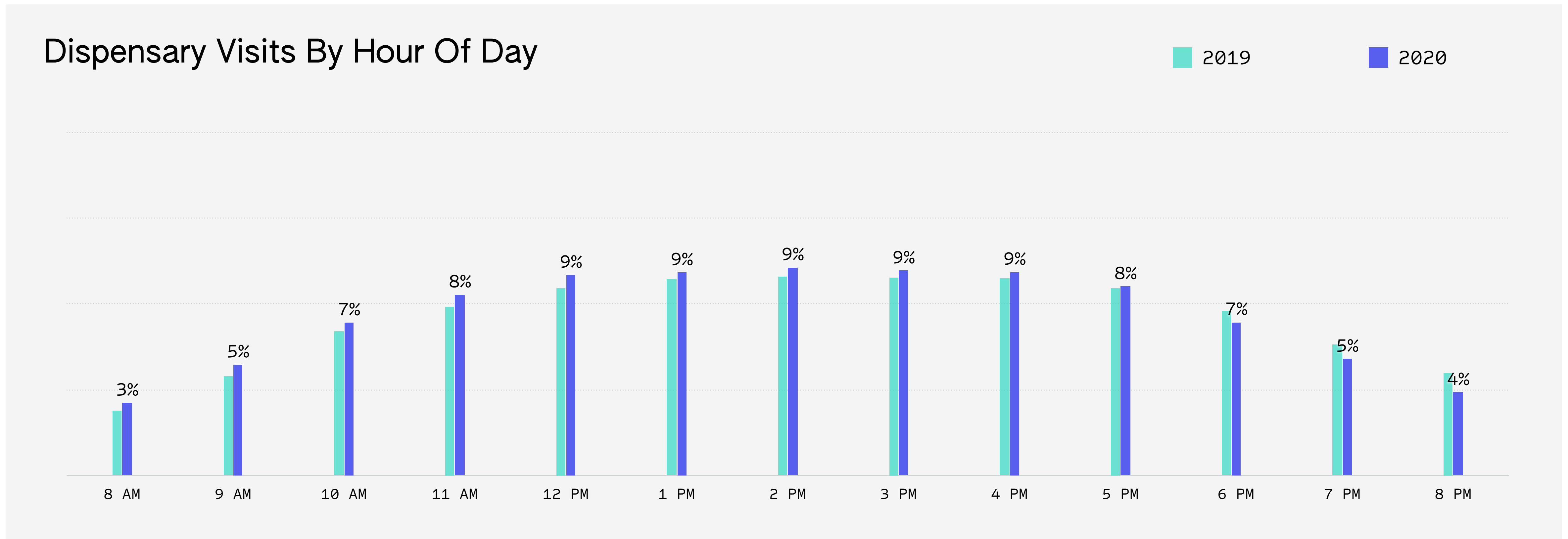
Chart illustrates category preferences based on % of total product sales. Pre-Lockdown period is defined as prior to the week of March 9th. New Normal period is defined as week of April 27th - week of December 31st, 2020.

What did overall
visitation to
dispensaries look
like in 2020
compared to 2019?

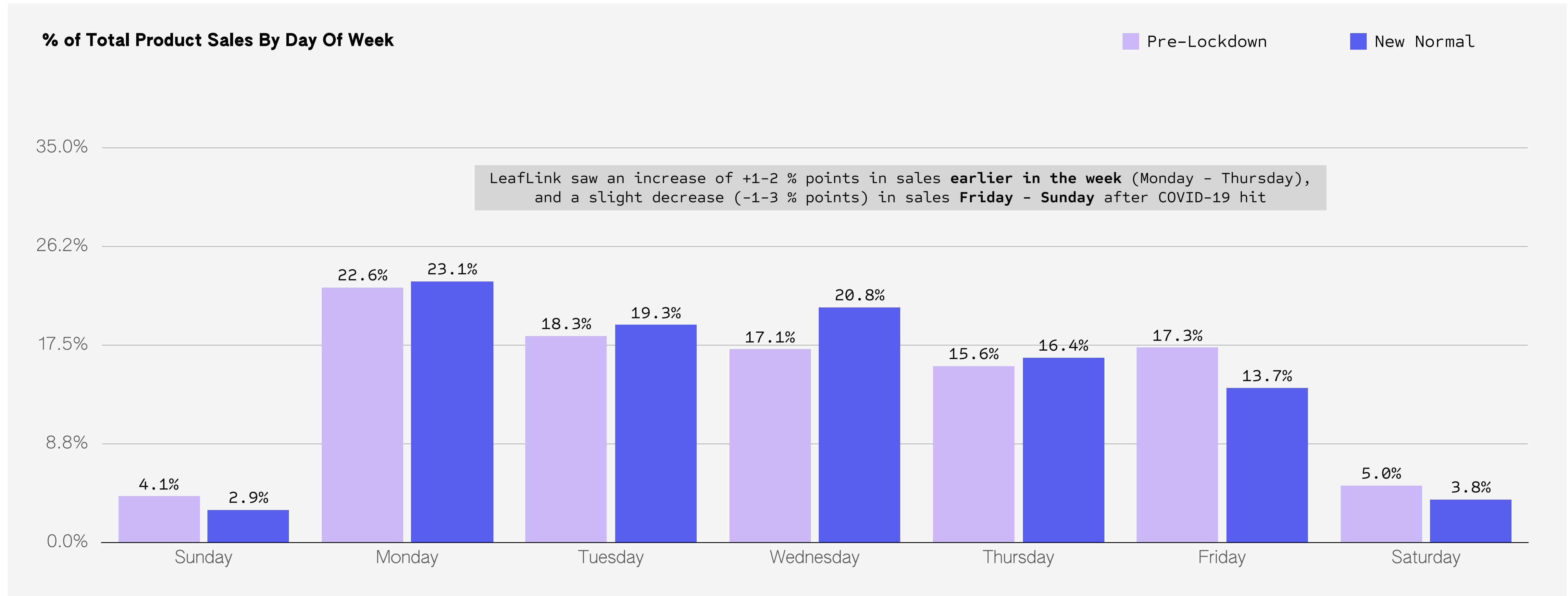
Cannabis dispensaries saw an uptick in foot traffic **earlier in the week**



Cannabis dispensaries were **busier midday** in 2020 compared to 2019

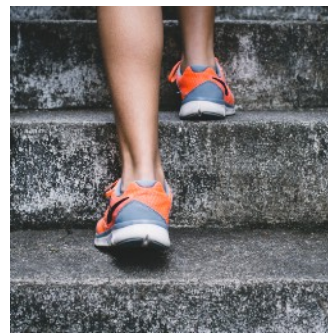


Dispensaries were placing orders earlier in the week throughout the pandemic

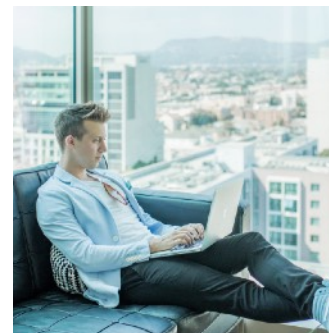


The path to a cannabis dispensary in 2020

Opportunity: Target consumers along their journey to and from a cannabis dispensary to intercept them in moments of consideration.



Outdoor & Fitness Enthusiasts



Students & Young Professionals



Young Suburban Parents



Nightlife & Entertainment Enthusiasts



Places Visited Before

- Climbing Gyms
- Nursery Schools
- Tech Startups
- Casinos
- Breweries
- Rental Car Locations
- Nightclubs

Cannabis Dispensary

Places Visited After

- Dive Bars
- Pilates Studios
- Trails
- Real Estate Offices
- Surf Spots
- Cocktail Bars
- Music Venues

Top feeder markets for cannabis dispensaries in 2020 vs. 2019

Denver, Seattle and Los Angeles were consistently ranked as the top 3 home markets of cannabis dispensary visitors in 2019 and 2020.

San Francisco fell considerably within the list of top home markets of dispensary visitors in 2020 (ranked #14) vs. 2019 (ranked #6), likely a result of COVID-19 restrictions enforced in the San Francisco Bay Area.

2019

DENVER, CO
SEATTLE, WA
LOS ANGELES, CA
PORTLAND, OR
LAS VEGAS, NV
SAN FRANCISCO, CA
PHOENIX, AZ
BOSTON, MA
CHICAGO, IL
SAN DIEGO, CA
SACRAMENTO, CA
DETROIT, MI
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO

2020

DENVER, CO
SEATTLE, WA
LOS ANGELES, CA
CHICAGO, IL
PORTLAND, OR
LAS VEGAS, NV
BOSTON, MA
PHOENIX, AZ
DETROIT, MI
TULSA, OK
SACRAMENTO, CA
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO
SAN DIEGO, CA
SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Who was visiting
cannabis dispensaries
during the pandemic?

Identify & reach post-pandemic cannabis dispensaries visitors

Compared to the average American, consumers who visited a cannabis dispensary in 2020 are **more** likely to be...

Health & Wellness Enthusiasts



They prioritize health & wellness, frequenting:

- Vegetarian restaurants **+72%**
- Tea rooms **+93%**
- Acupuncturists **+64%**
- Juice bars **+36%**
- Organic groceries **+29%**
- Massage studios **+29%**
- Health food stores **+22%**

Outdoor & Fitness Enthusiasts



They enjoy getting active, especially outdoors, and more likely to visit:

- State parks **+102%**
- Climbing Gyms **+93%**
- National parks **+74%**
- Cycle studios **+69%**
- Pilates studios **+62%**
- Mountains **+57%**
- Yoga studios **+42%**
- Trails **+42%**
- Beaches **+32%**

Nightlife & Entertainment Enthusiasts



They're more likely to socialize at:

- Casinos **+88%**
- Cocktail bars **+41%**
- Breweries **+33%**
- Wine shops **+33%**
- Art museums **+31%**
- Nightclubs **+27%**
- Karaoke bars **+26%**
- Tiki bars **+26%**
- Wine bars **+20%**
- Comedy clubs **+18%**

Foodies



They have an affinity for ethnic cuisines, and enjoy dining at:

- Poke places **+91%**
- Ramen restaurants **+83%**
- Thai restaurants **+62%**
- Bubble tea shops **+59%**
- Food trucks **+46%**
- Sushi restaurants **+34%**
- Cheese shops **+22%**

On The Go & Frequent Travelers



They're on the go, and likely to stop by:

- EV charging stations **+71%**
- Skate parks **+48%**
- Airport lounges **+43%**
- Board shops **+42%**
- Hotel bars **+40%**
- Airports **+33%**
- Rental car locations **+32%**
- Hotels **+25%**
- Vacation rentals **+18%**
- Bike rentals / shares **+25%**

2020 cannabis dispensary visitors are **not**...

Compared to the average American, consumers who visited a cannabis dispensary in 2020 are **less** likely to be...

Crafters & DIYers



They're less likely to visit:

- Fabric shops **-26%**
- Arts & crafts stores **-15%**
- Hobby shops **-13%**
- Photography studios **-13%**
- Hardware stores **-10%**
- Construction & landscaping **-9%**

Value Seekers & Bargain Hunters



They're less likely to shop for essentials at:

- Discount stores **-36%**
- Outlet stores **-20%**
- Flea markets **-12%**
- Outlet malls **-6%**
- Buffets **-4%**

College Students



They're less likely to spend their days at:

- College bookstores **-32%**
- College residence halls **-28%**
- College cafeterias **-33%**
- Student centers **-25%**
- College stadiums **-25%**
- College academic buildings **-21%**
- Universities **-20%**
- College libraries **-20%**
- Medical schools **-20%**
- Sorority houses **-14%**

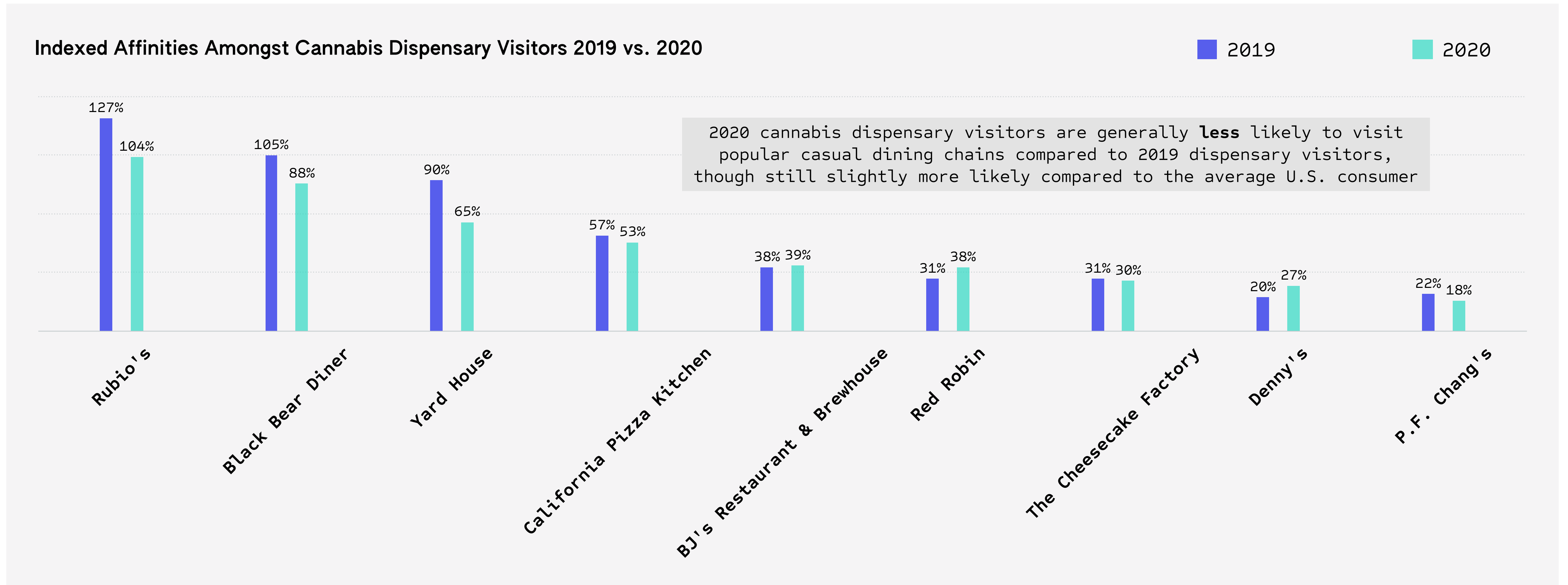
Parents with Young Kids At Home



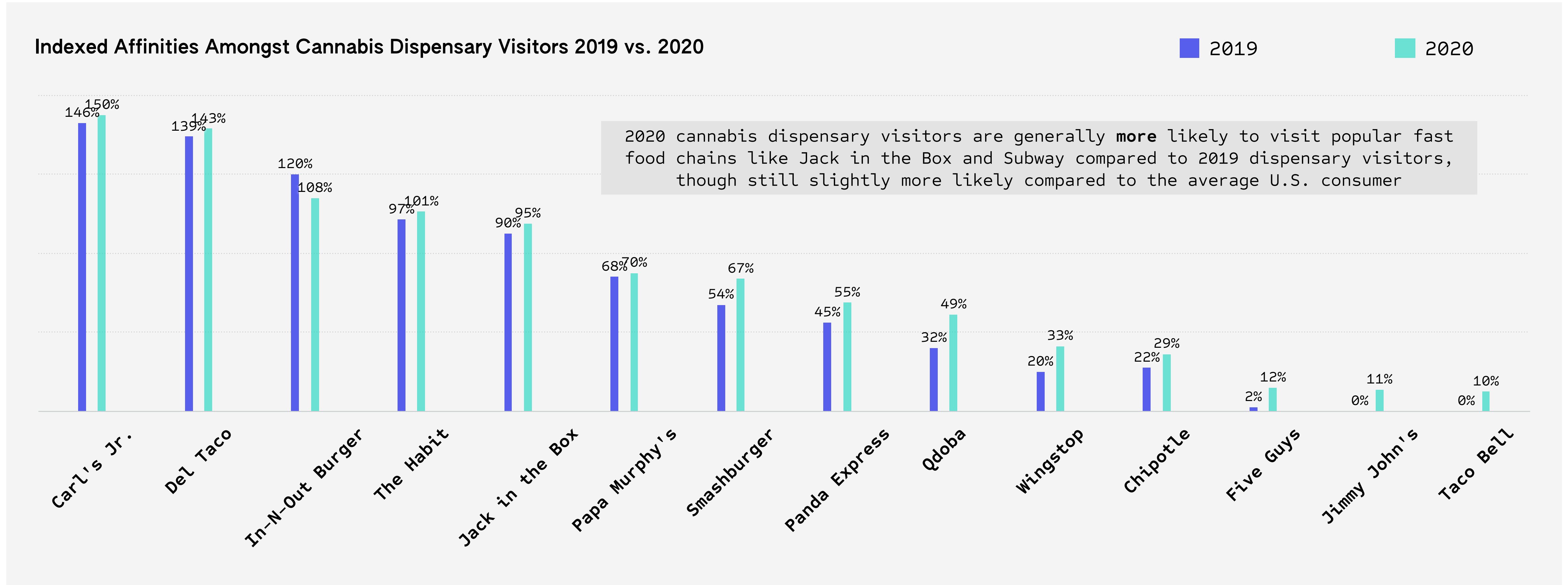
They're less likely to visit:

- High schools **-30%**
- Private schools **-23%**
- Schools **-16%**
- Kids stores **-16%**
- Middle schools **-16%**
- Big box stores **-16%**
- Baby stores **-13%**

They're generally less likely to dine out at some casual dining chains compared to 2019 visitors



They're generally more likely to dine out at some fast food chains compared to 2019 visitors



Key learnings & takeaways

Here's what we learned



In terms of overall sales, the COVID-19 pandemic was an accelerator (not a setback) for the cannabis industry.

Dispensaries saw sustained growth throughout the year, which spurred an increase in ordering.



New markets including the Midwest and South, and rural areas, drove cannabis industry growth throughout 2020.

Dispensaries saw an initial dip after shutdown orders went into place, followed by a boost from being declared “essential” businesses in late spring.



Millennials and Gen X consumers are the most avid cannabis consumers.

Dispensaries saw the smallest decline in foot traffic amongst this audience during the shutdown, and the quickest recovery amongst this audience compared to other demographics.



Cannabis consumers are into health & wellness.

They over-index on outdoor activities and are highly social. All of these activities will likely see a boom in uptake by cannabis consumers post-pandemic.

Key takeaways

1

Consumers Are Still Consuming

Location data shows that people are eager to re-engage in the physical world, even as habits are shifting

2

Localization Is More Important Than Ever

With behaviors varying by region, state, and DMA, strategies tailored by geography are critical to success

3

Aligning With Consumers' Mindset is Key

Delivering the right message in the right moment ensures relevance in today's rapidly changing landscape

Plan, reach & measure with Foursquare



PLAN

The Recovery Index

With this dynamic tool, you'll be the first to know when foot traffic starts to pick back up, with state-by-state metrics

COVID-19 Insights Series

Keep track of the latest foot traffic trends by category, region, population density, age, gender & more in our weekly reports

Custom Insights

Uncover how your foot traffic compares to key competitors, or unlock custom analyses specific to your business



REACH

Segment Based On Pre-Pandemic Behavior

Identify people who visited your locations or competitors' before COVID-19, capturing pent-up demand.

Reach Customers Where They Are

Use proximity targeting to deliver messaging in real-time, whether they're at home or out in the physical world rebuilding muscle memory of consumption.

Align With The Right Moments

Identify those who are out & about, delivering messaging when they're most likely to visit.



MEASURE

Quantify Ads' Impact On Store Visits

Focus on conversation rate and cost per store visit rather than lift, since every customer post-pandemic is a new customer .

Derive Rich Consumer Insights

Understand who is visiting locations since The Great Reset, building new customer profiles based on other places they go.

Improve ROAs

Analyze and optimize campaign performance with actionable reporting.

Personalize, predict & analyze with Foursquare



PERSONALIZE

Personalize app experience and enrich in products

Display photos, tips and places around your users or push notifications based on offline activity. Enrich your data with historical location attributes.



PREDICT

Predict and optimize

Predict customer demand and optimize supply decisions based on foot traffic patterns.

Identify store locations to determine the largest opportunity.

Determine variables that impact your trade areas such as distance/drive times from customers to store locations.



ANALYZE

Use POI data to its full potential.

Display on maps, complete master data location records or generate commercial or B2B lead generation lists

Understand your customers path to purchase journey

That includes online and offline behavior.

Grow your business with LeafLink's data products and advertising solutions

MarketScape

Comparative performance analysis

See where how products rank against state market competitors in terms of wholesale price and retailer orders.

In-depth market trends

Track which products and subcategories are gaining or losing popularity in your state.

Single-source, real-time data

Access up-to-date pricing data from a single source with filters for time period, product category, product subcategory, medical and adult-use.

Marketing Services

Targeted advertising

Drive orders and build brand awareness by reaching retailers at the point of purchase with premium placements.

Amplified audience

Leverage our growing network of retailers and promote your brand to hundreds of qualified leads at a time.

Performance tracking

Monitor order values generated from clicks on your placements through our reporting tools.

myBI

Optimize team performance

Use data to improve your sales efforts and guide team meetings toward success.

Dig deeper into customer trends

Analyze order history to gain a better understanding of customer behavior and build more proactive sales practices.

Enhance reporting with customizable visualizations

Monitor KPIs such as order volume, average order size, weekly ordering patterns, and more.

Thank You

CONTACT **FOURSQUARE**

CONTACT **LEAFLINK**

Are you a licensed cannabis brand?

Learn more about myBI and MarketScape [here](#) and Marketing Services [here](#).