



Student Members of AMA Endorse Medical Marijuana Resolution Goes to Full American Medical Association for November Vote

The prestigious American Medical Association (AMA) will consider endorsing therapeutic use of cannabis at its next interim meeting in November.

In June, the Medical Student Section (MSS) of the AMA, led by an ASA medical advisor, approved a resolution urging the physicians group to support the reclassification of marijuana for medical use. The MSS will send the resolution to the AMA House of Delegates for a final vote in November.

"While it is an historic occasion for any section of the AMA to endorse medical marijuana, the MSS is merely affirming existing science and urging the adoption of a sensible medical marijuana policy," said AMA-MSS member Sunil Aggarwal, who serves on ASA's

Medical and Scientific Advisory Board and is pushing the effort to gain AMA endorsement. "As a future medical doctor, I look forward to exploring and utilizing the many medical benefits of cannabinoid medicines in patient care."

With nearly 50,000 members, the MSS is the largest and most influential organization of medical students in the United States.

"This is a positive and necessary step in the right direction," said Dr. David Ostrow, a member of the AMA and Chair of ASA's Medical and Scientific Advisory Board. "We are hopeful that the full house of delegates will follow the example set by the American College of Physicians and place the needs and safety of our patients above politics."

In February, the American College of Physicians (ACP) adopted a resolution that called for rescheduling marijuana to make it available by prescription and expanding research into its medical efficacy. With 124,000 members, the ACP is the country's second largest physician group and the largest organization of doctors of internal medicine.

Since 1996, twelve U.S. states have adopted medical marijuana laws. Public opinion polls consistently show that as many as 4 out of 5 Americans support legal access to physician-recommended medical marijuana.

The AMA-MSS resolution is online at http://AmericansForSafeAccess.org/downloads/MSS-AMA_Resolution.pdf.

ASA Fights Counties' Challenge to Calif. Medical Cannabis Law Joins ACLU and State AG in Arguing Appeal of Patient ID Card Ruling

Two California counties faced off against ASA, the ACLU and the state attorney general in appeals court last month, arguing whether the state's medical cannabis law should be enforced.

San Diego and San Bernardino counties do not want to implement California's patient ID program and are appealing a superior court ruling that said they must.

In an unusual move by the justices, an overflow room was set up with television coverage from the courtroom to accommodate the extraordinary turnout to hear oral arguments from ASA Chief Counsel Joe Elford, Adam Wolfe of the American Civil Liberties Union and Deputy Attorney General Peter Krause.

The counties are contending that federal law preempts California's medical marijuana laws. San Bernardino also argues that when the legislature added the card program they unconstitutionally amend the 1996 initiative enacted by voters.

Attorneys for patients told the justices that they should affirm the lower court ruling that California's decision not to arrest or prosecute medical marijuana patients is

valid, even if the federal government prohibits all marijuana use.



Joe Elford

"States have traditionally been entrusted with caring for the health and welfare of their citizens," said ASA's Elford. "Proper implementation of California's medical marijuana laws benefits patients, law enforcement, and the entire state."

The case is the result of the November 2005 vote by San Diego County Board of Supervisors to challenge the legislature's patient ID

card program, a move that was joined by two others, San Bernardino and Merced. Merced agreed to implement the program after it lost the case in 2006.

"San Diego and San Bernardino Counties remain intent on defying the will of California's voters and the well-being of thousands of sick and dying patients at tremendous taxpayer expense," said Adam Wolf, the ACLU attorney.

A ruling in the case from the California 4th District Court of Appeal is expected later this summer. More information is online at AmericansForSafeAccess.org/SanDiegoCase.

ASA CHAPTER UPDATE: Western North Carolina

Among the affiliates of Americans for Safe Access enjoying recent success in defending patient rights is the Western North Carolina chapter, ASAWNC. Chapter members testified last month before the state legislature in support of making medical use legal in North Carolina, and the director's caregiver prevailed in an important court case.

On June 25, ASAWNC members traveled across the state to the capitol in Raleigh for

the North Carolina House Science and Technology committee hearing regarding NC H.R. 2405, which is a bill to study the public benefits of allowing medical marijuana in the state. Joining ASAWNC director Jean Marlowe in testifying before the committee in support of the bill was former Surgeon-General Dr. Jocelyn Elders, as well as Dr. Laura Hanson of Chapel Hill and patient Dixie Deerman, who is a Registered Nurse in Asheville.

(continued page 2)

Cannabis Research Update

Cannabinoids Fight Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma Tumor Growth

Swedish researchers report success using the endocannabinoid system to fight non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

The findings, published in the International Journal of Cancer, show that a cannabinoid agonist halts the spread and growth of cancerous tumors in animals with non-Hodgkin lymphoma. Investigators report that mice treated with the cannabinoid agonist experienced a 40% reduction in tumor weight.

The researchers conclude that ability of cannabinoids to both restrict the proliferation of cancer cells and reprogram the cells to die off makes "the endocannabinoid system a potential new therapeutic target for individualized therapy in lymphomas."

These findings are consistent with earlier studies that have shown cannabinoids can halt the spread of many types of cancers, including brain, breast, lung, prostate and pancreatic cancers.

Clinical Neuropathy Trial Shows Cannabis Effective

Even low doses of smoked cannabis can be effective in managing hard-to-treat neuropathic pain, according to California researchers. Investigators found that low- and high-dose cannabis produced similar levels of pain relief, reducing both the intensity and unpleasantness of the often unbearable nerve pain.

The researchers note that cannabis not only fights pain itself but also interacts with opiod painkillers to increase their effectiveness, particularly in neuropathic pain. They also note that using isolated synthetic cannabinoids such as THC (dronabinol) does not provide the same degree of efficacy as a whole-plant preparation of cannabis.

In conclusion, investigators observe that "cannabis does not rely on a relaxing or tranquilizing effect but rather reduces both the core component of nociception [pain transmission] and the emotional aspect of the pain experience to an equal degree."

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Anti-inflammatory Compound Found

A new anti-inflammatory compound that is not psychoactive has been found in large concentrations in the cannabis plant. The compound, which can ease swelling, pain and inflammation, may lead to the development of new treatments for such diseases as rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis and Crohn's disease.

The chemical, called beta-caryophyllene, helps combat inflammation without affecting the brain. Researchers demonstrated in an animal study that beta-caryophyllene attaches to CB-2 cannabinoid receptors, producing the anti-inflammatory effect, but not to the CB-1 receptors, which are associated with the psychoactive effects of THC and other cannabinoids.

Analysis of cannabis has found it to contain as much as 35% beta-caryophyllene. Other common plants that contain the oil include black pepper, oregano, basil, lime, cinnamon, carrots, and celery.

(ASAWNC, continued from page 1)

That testimony came just two days after Steve Marlowe, Jean's caregiver, won an important ruling in state court, where he was facing state marijuana charges. The judge threw out all evidence obtained with the search warrant, ruling that the informant used by the Polk County Sheriff's Department was "not a credible witness" and that they had acted with "willful intent, or with reckless disregard for the law" in using this informant as a basis for their search warrant. As a result, all charges were dismissed later that day.

By the end of the week, the District Attorney had ordered the sheriff to return all property taken from the Marlowes, except for the marijuana. This was the third time law enforcement has been ordered to return equipment to the Marlowe home. ASAWNC made sure news media was on hand to cover the return of property.

For more about ASAWNC, see their videos on YouTube at www.youtube.com/asawnc and www.youtube.com/marloweism.

ACTION ALERT: Tell Congress to Stop Funding Medical Marijuana Raids Today!

It's time to stop wasting taxpayer dollars on raiding state-licensed patients and providers. Congress can do it. The Hinchey-Rohrabacher amendment to the Commerce-Justice-State appropriations bill instructs the Department of Justice to use its money wisely and specifically prohibits the Department from using appropriated funds to conduct raids or otherwise prevent the various states from implementing laws that authorize the therapeutic use of cannabis.

Tell your U.S. Representative that this amendment can do two things:

- (1) Conserve taxpayers' money by eliminating funding for DEA raids aimed at state-certified medical cannabis patients and caregivers.
- (2) Protect legal medical cannabis patients from having their homes and workspaces raided by the DEA.

For your representative's phonenumber see www.house.gov or call the Congressional switchboard at: (202) 224-3121. Contact George@AmericansforSafeAccess for additional information.

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