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Federal law bars doctors from prescribing marijuana and severely curtails research into its therapeutic uses. Though some small studies of marijuana are now underway, the National Institute on Drug Abuse — the only legal source of marijuana for clinical research in the U.S. — has consistently made it difficult for researchers to obtain marijuana for studies ... and impossible to do the sort of large-scale, extremely costly trials that are needed before the FDA can approve marijuana as a prescription medicine.

Please help MPP change state and federal laws so that seriously ill people nationwide can use medical marijuana without fear of arrest and imprisonment.

**“Marijuana has been reported to be effective in: a) reducing intraocular pressure in glaucoma; b) reducing nausea and vomiting associated with chemotherapy; c) stimulating the appetite for patients living with AIDS ...; d) controlling spasticity associated with spinal cord injury and multiple sclerosis; e) decreasing the suffering from chronic pain; and f) controlling seizures. ... [It] seems to work differently than many conventional medications for the above problems, making it a possible option for persons resistant to the conventional medications.”**

— **American Public Health Association**, concluding that “greater harm is caused by the legal consequences of [medical marijuana’s] prohibition than possible risks of medicinal use”



## MEDICAL MARIJUANA:

### THE NEED FOR SAFE AND LEGAL ACCESS

“Medical marijuana helped me when the strongest prescription painkillers failed — or left me in such a stupor I couldn’t function. Patients struggling for their lives and dignity against illnesses like MS, cancer, or AIDS should not be treated as criminals.”

— multiple sclerosis patient  
Montel Williams



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## WHAT IS MEDICAL MARIJUANA?

Many patients suffering with HIV/AIDS, glaucoma, cancer and chemotherapy, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, and other debilitating illnesses find that marijuana provides relief from their symptoms. Marijuana's medical applications include:

- Relief from nausea and appetite loss;
- Reduction of intraocular (within the eye) pressure;
- Reduction of muscle spasms; and
- Relief from chronic pain.

Physicians often find that marijuana is able to provide relief for symptoms and illnesses when prescription medicines fail to do so. Yet, other than for four people with special permission from the federal government, medical marijuana remains illegal under federal law.

## WHAT OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE TO PATIENTS WHO FIND MEDICAL MARIJUANA HELPFUL?

Patients for whom other treatments have proven unsafe or ineffective have three options:

- Continue to suffer without effective treatment;
- Illegally obtain marijuana — and risk suffering consequences related to its prohibition, such as impure, contaminated, or chemically adulterated marijuana, and/or arrests, jail, fines, court costs, property forfeiture, probation, and criminal records; or
- Become a resident of one of the 13 states that protect medical marijuana patients from arrest and jail.

## WHERE IS PUBLIC OPINION ON MEDICAL MARIJUANA?

Thirteen states — Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington — have enacted laws allowing seriously ill patients to use marijuana with a doctor's recommendation. Patients in these states are protected from state-level arrest and prosecution.

A national Gallup poll released in November 2005 found that 78% of Americans support "making marijuana legally available for doctors to prescribe in order to reduce pain and suffering."

## WHERE DO DOCTORS STAND ON MEDICAL MARIJUANA?

After analyzing all existing data on marijuana's therapeutic uses, the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine concluded in a 1999 report funded by the White House drug policy office that "there are some limited circumstances in which we recommend smoking marijuana for medical uses."

A 2005 national survey of physicians found that 73% approve of marijuana use to alleviate symptoms such as chronic fatigue, nausea, and pain commonly associated with AIDS, cancer and glaucoma; 75% believe that the federal government should not be able to prosecute people who use, grow, or obtain marijuana prescribed by a doctor for chronic fatigue and pain; and 76% approve of state laws allowing the use of marijuana to alleviate chronic fatigue and pain.

The American College of Physicians, American Public Health Association, American Nurses Association, American Academy of HIV Medicine, Lymphoma Foundation of America, Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, and many other medical institutions support safe and legal access to medical marijuana for patients whose doctors recommend it.

## MPP is the largest marijuana policy reform organization in the United States.

MPP's projects include:

- lobbying state legislatures to pass legislation to protect medical marijuana patients from arrest;
- passing state ballot initiatives to protect medical marijuana patients from arrest;
- helping activists build support for medical marijuana bills in their home states;
- building support for medical marijuana legislation in the U.S. Congress;
- encouraging major health and medical associations to take favorable positions on medical marijuana; and
- urging federal agencies to clear the way for FDA approval of marijuana as a prescription medicine.

## And we need your help.

Please fill out the form on the reverse to support MPP's work with a financial contribution or to receive information by U.S. mail and/or e-mail. ►