

NAADAC Leadership Opposes Recreational Marijuana

Revised Position Statement Speaks out Against Medicinal and Recreational Use

BY DONOVAN KUEHN

Reacting to the voter initiatives passed in Colorado and Washington allowing recreational use of marijuana, the NAADAC Executive Committee has taken a stand against these laws.

NAADAC's position is unequivocal: "Marijuana should be subject to the same research, consideration and study as any other potential medicine, under the standards of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)."

NAADAC came to this conclusion because marijuana "has a high potential for abuse, has no currently accepted medical use in treatment in the United States and has a lack of accepted safety for use under medical supervision."

What About the Voters?

In addition to the recreational marijuana initiatives passed in 2012, voters in many states have approved the concept of "medical marijuana" in referenda across the nation. While NAADAC supports the right of citizens to participate in the democratic process, it does not

support legislative or voter ballot initiatives to legalize marijuana for medical and recreational use.

The NAADAC position statement states: "Voter and legislative passage of marijuana-legalization laws may actually inhibit good medicine because they shortcut the necessary step of researching the marijuana plant and the chemicals within that may have legitimate medical applications."

"NAADAC recognizes the supremacy of federal regulatory standards for drug approval and distribution. NAADAC recognizes that states can enact limitations that are more restrictive but rejects the concept that states could enact more permissive regulatory standards. NAADAC discourages state interference in the federal medication approval process," reads the position paper.

"People who use marijuana are endangering their health," said Cynthia Moreno Tuohy, NCAC II, CCDC III, SAP, Executive Director of NAADAC.

(See position statement on page 6)



NAADAC Position Statement on the Medical and Recreational Use of Marijuana

Summary

NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals does not support the use of marijuana as medicine or for recreational purposes. Marijuana should be subject to the same research, consideration and study as any other potential medicine, under the standards of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). NAADAC does not support legislative or voter ballot initiatives to legalize marijuana for medical or recreational use. Further, NAADAC maintains its position that there are significant public health problems and costs related to marijuana legalization.

Background

■ Marijuana is listed in Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act (CSA), the most restrictive schedule. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), which administers the CSA, continues to support that placement, and FDA concurred because marijuana met the three criteria for placement in Schedule I under 21 U.S.C. 812(b)(1) (e.g., marijuana has a high potential for abuse, has no currently accepted medical use in treatment in the United States, and has a lack of accepted safety for use under medical supervision).¹

■ Marijuana should be subject to the same research, consideration, and study as any other potential medicine. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is the sole Federal agency that approves drug products as safe and effective for intended indications. The Federal

Food, Drug, and Cosmetic (FD&C) Act requires that new drugs be shown to be safe and effective for their intended use before being marketed in this country. FDA's drug approval process requires well-controlled clinical trials that provide the necessary scientific data upon which FDA makes its approval and labeling decisions. If a drug product is to be marketed, then disciplined, systematic, scientifically conducted trials are the best means to obtain data to ensure that drug is safe and effective when

No sound scientific studies support medical use of marijuana for treatment and no animal or human data supports the safety or efficacy of marijuana for general medical use.

used as indicated. Efforts that seek to bypass the FDA drug approval process would not serve the interests of public health because they might expose patients to unsafe and ineffective drug products. FDA has not approved smoked marijuana for any condition or disease indication. NAADAC recognizes the supremacy of federal regulatory standards for drug approval and distribution. NAADAC recognizes that states can enact limitations that are more restrictive but rejects the concept that states could enact more permissive regulatory standards. NAADAC discourages state interference in the federal medication approval process.

■ There is currently sound evidence that smoked marijuana is harmful. A past evaluation by several Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) agencies, including the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and National Institute for Drug Abuse (NIDA), concluded that no sound scientific studies supported medical use of marijuana for treatment in the United States, and no animal or human data supported the safety or efficacy of marijuana for general medical use. There are alternative FDA-approved medications (i.e., Oral THC) in existence for treatment of many of the proposed uses of smoked marijuana.² NAADAC rejects smoking as a means of drug delivery since it is not safe.

■ A growing number of states have passed voter referenda (or legislative actions) making smoked marijuana available for a variety of medical conditions upon a doctor's recommendation, and for recreational use without a doctor's recommendation. These measures are inconsistent with efforts to ensure that medications undergo the rigorous scientific scrutiny of the FDA approval process and are proven safe and effective under the standards of the FD&C Act. Further, voter or legislative initiative does not meet the scientific standards for approval of medicine. Voter and legislative passage of marijuana-legalization laws may actually inhibit good medicine because they shortcut the necessary step of researching the marijuana plant and the chemicals within that may have legitimate medical applications. NAADAC does not support legislative, regulatory or voter ballot initiatives to legalize marijuana for medical or recreational use.



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Further, NAADAC opposes proposals to legalize marijuana anywhere in the United States.

*Note: This position statement incorporates and expands upon the **Position Statement on Medical Marijuana**, approved by the NAADAC Executive Committee in January 2011.*

Sources:

¹The DEA Position on Marijuana, http://www.justice.gov/dea/docs/marijuana_position_2011.pdf

²ASAM White Paper on State-Level Proposals to Legalize Marijuana, <http://www.asam.org/docs/public-policy-statements/state-level-proposals-to-legalize-marijuana-final2773DD668C2D.pdf?sfvrsn=2>