



Drug War Makes Marijuana Top Crop

2006: The Year In Review -- NORML's Top 10 Events That Shaped Marijuana Policy

#1: Cannabis Smoking Not Linked To Lung Cancer, UAT Cancers, Largest Case-Controlled Study Says.

Smoking cannabis, even long-term, is not positively associated with increased incidence of lung-cancer, according to the findings of the largest population-based case-control study ever conducted. "We did not observe a positive association of marijuana use -- even heavy long-term use -- with lung cancer, controlling for tobacco smoking and other potential cofounders," investigators concluded. Their data further revealed that moderate lifetime users had an inverse association between cannabis use and lung cancer. The five-year trial was sponsored by the US National Institutes of Health (NIH). Full text of the study appeared in the October issue of the journal *Cancer Epidemiology Biomarkers & Prevention*. Read the full story at: http://norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=6912.

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Marijuana Use Per Se Not a 'Gateway' To Illicit Drug Use, Study Says

December 7, 2006 - Pittsburgh, PA, USA: Adolescent marijuana use is not a reliable predictor of later substance abuse, according to clinical trial data published this month in *The American Journal of Psychiatry*.

Investigators at the University of Pittsburgh, School of Pharmacy, tracked the drug use patterns of 214 boys, beginning at ages 10 to 12, for a period of up to twelve years. All of the subjects eventually used either legal or illegal drugs. Researchers found that adolescents who used marijuana prior to using other drugs, including alcohol and tobacco, were no more likely to develop a substance abuse disorder than other subjects in the study.

The study's findings "call into question the long-held belief that has shaped prevention efforts and governmental policy for six decades," researchers declared in a press release.

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Marijuana Ranks As Top US Cash Crop

December 21, 2006 - Washington, DC, USA: Cannabis is the largest cash crop in the United States, outpacing the production of corn and wheat combined, according to an economic analysis released this week.

According to the study, "Marijuana Production in the United States, 2006," domestic marijuana production has increased ten-fold in the past 25 years from 1,000 metric tons (2.2 million pounds) to 10,000 metric tons (22 million pounds) and now has an estimated annual value of \$36 billion.

"Despite their best efforts, the [government] has been unable to curtail the growth of domestic marijuana cultivation in the United States, let alone make any progress toward suppressing, abolishing, or eliminating this market phenomenon," the report states. "The focus for public policy should be how to effectively control this market through regulation and taxation in order to achieve immediate and realistic goals, such as reducing teenage access, rather than to continue to

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The Willamette Valley NORML News Report

is an all-volunteer, not-for-profit project to record and broadcast news, announcements and information about cannabis law reform.

The W-V-NORML News Report is produced by the Eugene, OREGON chapter of NORML, the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws

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Check 'em out on-line! *visit:*

WillametteValleyNORML.org

A Voice for Responsible Marijuana Smokers

Since its founding in 1970, NORML has provided a voice in the public policy debate for those Americans who oppose marijuana prohibition and favor an end to the practice of arresting marijuana smokers. A nonprofit public-interest advocacy group, NORML represents the interests of the tens of millions of Americans who smoke marijuana responsibly. During the 1970s, NORML led the successful efforts to decriminalize minor marijuana offenses in 11 states and significantly lower marijuana penalties in all others.

The oldest and largest marijuana legalization organization in the country, NORML maintains a professional staff in Washington, DC, and a network of volunteer state and local [NORML Chapters](#) across the country. Check 'em out, and find the one nearest you!

The NORML mission is to move public opinion sufficiently to achieve the repeal of marijuana prohibition so that the responsible use of cannabis by adults is no longer subject to penalty.

When marijuana is enjoyed responsibly, subjecting users to harsh criminal and civil penalties provides no public benefit and causes terrible injustices. For reasons of public safety, public health, economics and justice, the prohibition laws should be repealed to the extent that they criminalize responsible marijuana use. **NORML, the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws – is located at 1600 K Street, NW, Suite 501, Washington, DC 20006-2832. Phone (202) 483-5500, Fax: (202) 483-0057 or visit: www.norml.org**

Today Willamette Valley NORML joins the fight to reform state and federal marijuana laws, whether by voter initiative or through the elected legislatures. W-V-NORML will serve as an informational resource to media on marijuana-related stories, providing a perspective to offset the [anti-marijuana propaganda](#) from the government; lobby state and federal legislators in support of reform legislation; publish a regular [newsletter](#); host an informative web site; and serve as the umbrella group for a regional network of citizen-activists committed to ending marijuana prohibition and legalizing marijuana.

Along with their parent organization, W-V-NORML will sponsor public advertising campaigns to better educate the public about marijuana and alternatives to current marijuana policy; provide legal assistance and support to victims of the current laws; and promote relevant research.

W-V-NORML supports the right of adults to use marijuana responsibly, whether for [medical](#) or [personal](#) purposes. All penalties, both civil and criminal, should be eliminated for responsible use. W-V-NORML also advocates the legalization of [hemp](#) (non-psychoactive marijuana) for industrial use. **To find out more, like how you can help, call, write or visit our website. You'll be glad you did!**

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#2: Nearly Half Of Americans Say Pot Should Be Regulated Like Alcohol.

Nearly one out of two Americans support amending federal law "to let states legally regulate and tax marijuana the way they do liquor and gambling," according to a national poll of 1,004 likely voters by Zogby International and commissioned by the NORML Foundation in March. Forty-six percent of respondents -- including a majority of those polled on the east (53 percent) and west (55 percent) coasts -- said they supported legalization. Nearly two-thirds of 18-29 year-olds (65 percent) and half of 50-64 year-olds think federal law should be amended to allow states the option to regulate marijuana. Read the full story at: http://norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=6838.

#3: Marijuana Arrests For Year 2005 Most Ever.

Police arrested an estimated 786,545 persons for marijuana violations in 2005, the highest annual total ever recorded in the United States, according to statistics compiled in September by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. An American is now arrested for violating marijuana laws every 40 seconds. Read the full story at: http://norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=7040.

#4: Clinical Trial: Vaporization Is A "Safe And Effective" Cannabinoid Delivery System.

Vaporization is a "safe and effective" cannabinoid delivery system for patients desiring the rapid onset of action associated with cannabis inhalation, but who are seeking to avoid the respiratory risks of smoking, according to clinical trial data published this spring in the *Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences*. Vaporization delivers the "pulmonal uptake of THC [in a manner] comparable to the smoking of cannabis, while avoiding the respiratory disadvantages of smoking," the study concluded. Read the full story at: http://norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=6885.

#5: Cannabinoids Curb Brain Tumor Growth, First-Ever Patient Trial Shows.

THC administration decreases recurrent glioblastoma multiforme (GBM) tumor growth in humans, according to the findings of the first-ever clinical trial assessing cannabinoids' anti-tumor action. Previous preclinical studies indicate that cannabinoids and endocannabinoids can stave off tumor progression and trigger cell death in other cancer cell lines, including breast carcinoma,

prostate carcinoma, colorectal carcinoma, skin carcinoma, and pancreatic adenocarcinoma. Read the full story at: http://norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=6947.

#6: Democrat Shift In Congress Bodes Well For Cannabis-Law Reform.

Democrats takeover this November of the House and Senate is likely to pay dividends for marijuana-law reformers in '07 and '08. Commenting on the election results, NORML Executive Director Allen St. Pierre said, "It is our hope that with new Democratic leadership we will finally be able to move forward with legislation and hearings on both the physician-approved medical use of marijuana as well as the decriminalization of cannabis for responsible adults." Read the full story at: http://norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=7084.

#7: Court Says State Medi-Pot Policies Not Trumped By Federal Law.

California's decade-old medical marijuana law is legal because it does not "require" conduct that violates federal law, a state superior court judge ruled in December. The decision rejected a lawsuit filed by San Diego County supervisors, who had argued that the state's medical cannabis laws should be pre-empted by the federal Controlled Substances Act. The supervisors have announced that they intend to appeal the decision. Read the full story at: http://norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=7117.

#8: Congress Scales Back Ban On Student Aid For Drug Offenders.

Congress approved legislation in 2006 lifting the ban on federal aid to students who have a prior, non-violent drug conviction. Under the amended law, students with past drug convictions will now be eligible to apply for federal financial aid, although those students who are convicted of a nonviolent drug offense while in college will continue to be stripped of their federal aid eligibility. Since 1998, some 200,000 students have been denied financial aid under the law. Read the full story at: http://norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=6809.

#9: Court Strikes Down Alaska Pot Recrim Law.

A 2006 Alaska law seeking to redefine minor marijuana possession as a criminal offense punishable by jail time is unconstitutional, a state superior court judge ruled in July. The ruling struck down sections of the new law criminalizing the possession of one ounce or less of cannabis, but leaves in place measures prohibiting the possession of greater amounts. Read the full story at: http://norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=6948.

<continued from previous page> **#10: New Report Finds Cannabis Can Halt Disease Progression.**

Recently published clinical and preclinical research on the therapeutic use of cannabis indicates that cannabinoids may curb the progression of various serious and life-threatening diseases -- particularly autoimmune disorders such as multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, and inflammatory bowel disease, as well as neurological disorders such as Alzheimer's disease and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis -- according to a comprehensive new report published in September by the NORML Foundation. The report summarizes over 140 recently published trials assessing the therapeutic utility of cannabinoids for the treatment of more than a dozen diseases, including diabetes, hepatitis C, multiple sclerosis, and Tourette's syndrome. Read the full story at: http://norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=7002.

Visit: http://norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=7134 for the full story.

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Investigators said that environmental factors (e.g., a greater exposure to illegal drugs in their neighborhoods) as well as subjects' "proneness to deviancy" were the two characteristics that most commonly predicted substance abuse.

"This evidence supports what's known as the common liability model ... [which] states [that] the likelihood that someone will transition to the use of illegal drugs is determined not by the preceding use of a particular drug, but instead by the user's individual tendencies and environmental circumstances," investigators stated in a press release. They added, "The emphasis on the drugs themselves, rather than other, more important factors that shape a person's behavior, has been detrimental to drug policy and prevention programs."

A 1999 review by US National Academy of Science's Institute of Medicine also disputed the hypothesis that cannabis use is a stepping-stone to other illicit drug use, concluding that pot was not a "gateway drug to the extent that it is a cause or even that it is the most significant predictor of serious drug abuse."

For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, or Paul Armentano, NORML Senior Policy Analyst, at (202) 483-5500. Full text of the study, "Predictors of marijuana use in adolescents before and after licit drug use: examination of the gateway hypothesis,"

appears in the December issue of *The American Journal of Psychiatry*. Further discussion of this study is available on the December 6, 2006 edition of NORML's daily AudioStash at: <http://www.normlaudiostash.com>.

<continued from NEW DIRECTOR, page 1 > sacrifice achievable goals in exchange for unachievable long-term goals that have failed to materialize over the last 25 years."

According to the report, marijuana cultivation in California is responsible for more than a third of all US pot production.

Cannabis ranks as the top cash crop in twelve states and is worth more than \$1 billion annually in five states: California, Tennessee, Kentucky, Hawaii, and Washington.

A 1998 NORML report estimated the value of domestic marijuana production at that time at approximately \$25 billion.

For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500. Full text of the report, "Marijuana Production in the United States, 2006," is available online at: <http://www.drugscience.org/bcr/index.html>.

Cannabinoid Treatments May Offer Novel Therapy For Parkinson's Disease

December 21, 2006 - Frankfurt, Germany: Cannabis-based medicines could offer therapeutic relief for symptoms of Parkinson's disease (PD) and may also moderate the course of the illness, according to a scientific review published this month in the journal *Current Medicinal Chemistry*.

"Cannabinoids are antioxidant, inhibit glutamate toxicity, and they also possess anti-inflammatory properties," authors state. "All together, we can conclude that cannabinoid-based medicines could be neuroprotective in the course of the disease, whereas [individual] compounds ... might modulate the behavioral effects of ... PD motor symptoms themselves."

Parkinson's disease is a neurodegenerative disorder affecting the basal ganglia that results in a loss of motor coordination, organ failure, and death. The disease is characterized by a loss of dopaminergic

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Survey data indicates that cannabis can provide subjective relief for symptoms of PD, including bradykinesia (extreme slowness of movement and reflexes), muscle rigidity, and tremor. However, a recent clinical trial assessing the short-term use of oral THC on symptoms of PD found the drug to have little immediate effect on patients' movement.

For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Senior Policy Analyst, at (202) 483-5500. Full text of the study, "An overview of Parkinson's disease and the cannabinoid system and possible benefits of cannabinoid-based treatments," appears in the December issue of Current Medicinal Chemistry.

FDA To Rule On Prescription Use Of Controversial Cannabinoid Blocking Agent

December 14, 2006 - New York, NY, USA: US regulatory authorities have announced that they will decide this spring on whether to approve the prescription use of the cannabinoid receptor antagonist SR 141716A, to be marketed by Sanofi-Aventis Pharmaceuticals as a diabetes treatment and anti-obesity drug under the trade name Acomplia (Rimonabant). In July, the selective cannabinoid blocking agent received regulatory approval in a handful of European nations as a dietary aid. Acomplia is the first cannabinoid antagonist ever to be approved for human consumption.

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will review newly published clinical data indicating that Acomplia significantly lowers blood sugar levels in humans compared to placebo. The FDA had previously denied Sanofi permission to market Acomplia in the United States.

In clinical trials, patients who take Acomplia on a daily basis lose, on average, 14 pounds their first year, and an additional 2.4 pounds their second year. However, published reports indicate that more than 15 percent of subjects who try the drug discontinue its use because of intolerable side effects, including nausea, anxiety, headaches, upper respiratory tract infections, and depression. At least one study reports a 2.7-fold increased risk of psychiatric disorders in Acomplia users.

Acomplia works by blocking the natural binding of endogenous cannabinoids (as well as exogenous cannabinoids such as THC) to the neuronal CB1 receptors, causing users to lose their appetites. (Volunteers administered both Acomplia and cannabis in clinical trials also report decreased feelings of euphoria and other physiological effects associated with THC.) However, because the endocannabinoid receptor system is believed to be involved in the regulation of a broad range of primary biological functions -- including appetite, body temperature, mood regulation, blood pressure, bone density, reproduction, learning capacity, and motor coordination -- some experts are concerned that the long-term use of Acomplia may eventually contribute to a host of significant adverse health effects.

"CB1 receptors commonly play protective roles in minimizing the consequences of free-radical induced, age-related illnesses, ... as well as the aging process itself," says University of Colorado at Colorado Springs biology professor Dr. Robert Melamede. "The long-term use of CB1 antagonist drugs such as Acomplia may turn out to be disastrous [because] they may promote the illnesses that CB1 activity normally protects against."

In preclinical trials, newborn mice injected with Rimonabant refuse feeding and often die days after birth. Mice genetically bred to lack the CB1 receptor also suffer from numerous health defects such as cognitive decline, hypoalgesia, decreased locomotor activity, and increased mortality compared to healthy controls.

At least one published case study also reports that daily use of the drug may have triggered neurological symptoms of multiple sclerosis in a volunteer with no known history of the disease.

According to Sanofi spokespersons, the FDA will make its determination by April 26. Sanofi-Aventis is the third largest pharmaceutical company in the world.

For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Senior Policy Analyst, at (202) 483-5500.

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Judge Upholds Ruling Dismissing Counties' Prop. 215 Challenge

December 7, 2006 - San Diego, CA, USA: Superior Court Judge William Nevitt upheld last month's preliminary ruling rejecting a lawsuit filed by San Diego County supervisors, who had argued that the state's medical cannabis laws should be pre-empted by the federal Controlled Substances Act.

In his opinion, Nevitt declared that the state's ten-year-old medical marijuana law is legal because it does not "require" conduct that violates federal law. Nevitt also rejected plaintiffs challenge to California's three-year-old medical ID card system, ruling that "requiring the counties to issue identification cards for the purpose of identifying those whom California chooses not to arrest and prosecute for certain activities involving marijuana does not create a 'positive conflict' [with federal law.]"

In 2004, the California legislature approved legislation calling on counties to issue identification cards to state-authorized medical cannabis patients.

San Diego supervisors, along with lawmakers from San Bernardino and Merced counties, filed suit against the state of California and NORML's San Diego affiliate earlier this year rather than comply with the ID card law.

It is unclear whether defendants will appeal Judge Nevitt's ruling.

"We are pleased that the court ruled that San Diego must follow California's medical marijuana law," said California NORML Coordinator Dale Gieringer. "[Defendants] would be well advised to stop wasting taxpayers' money on this ill-advised lawsuit. The ID cards will save the county money by avoiding needless arrest and prosecution of legal patients."

For more information, please contact Keith Stroup, NORML Legal Counsel, at (202) 483-5500 or Dale Gieringer, California NORML Coordinator, at (415) 563-5858. Text of the decision in the case, County of San Diego v. San Diego NORML and the State of California, is available online at: <http://www.normlaudiostash.com>.

San Diego Supervisors To Appeal Prop. 215 Ruling

December 14, 2006 - San Diego, CA, USA: The San Diego County Board of Supervisors voted 4-1 this week to appeal a recent Superior Court decision rejecting the county's challenge to California's medicinal cannabis laws.

Last week, Superior Court Judge William Nevitt denied the county's lawsuit, which had argued that both Prop. 215 and the state's medical marijuana ID card program should be pre-empted by the federal Controlled Substances Act.

In his opinion, Nevitt declared that the state's decade-old medical marijuana law is legal because it does not "require" conduct that violates federal law. Nevitt also rejected plaintiffs challenge to California's three-year-old medical ID card system, ruling that "requiring the counties to issue identification cards for the purpose of identifying those whom California chooses not to arrest and prosecute for certain activities involving marijuana does not create a 'positive conflict' [with federal law.]"

On Tuesday, San Diego supervisors reaffirmed in a closed-session vote that they believe California's medical marijuana laws promote drug abuse and should be superceded by federal law. They intend to file an appeal imminently with California's 4th Appellate District.

NORML Executive Director Allen St. Pierre strongly criticized the supervisors' decision.

"This appeal is not about politicians seeking clarity in the law; it's about the supervisors opposition to any use of medicinal cannabis," he said. "Legal experts, including California's Legislative Counsel, the state attorney general, and now a superior court judge have all determined that the physician-supervised medical use of marijuana is legal in the state of California. The supervisors' decision to appeal this case is an affront to their constituents and a gross waste of taxpayers' dollars."

San Diego's supervisors, along with lawmakers from San Bernardino and Merced counties, initially filed suit in February against the state of California and NORML's San Diego affiliate rather than comply with the statewide ID card program.**next page>**

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Shafer Report Chair Dies

December 21, 2006 - Meadville, PA, USA: Former Pennsylvania Gov. Raymond P. Shafer passed away last week after suffering complications from congestive heart failure. He was 89 years old.

Shafer served as Governor from 1967 to 1971. In 1971, Shafer -- a Republican -- was appointed by President Richard Nixon to chair the National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse. The Presidential Commission, later known as the Shafer Commission, concluded in 1972 that "neither the marijuana user nor the drug itself can be said to constitute a danger to public safety," and recommended to Congress that "citizens should not be criminalized or jailed merely for private possession or use."

Though rejected by Nixon -- who refused to even read the report -- and largely ignored by Congress, the Shafer Commission's report was instrumental in convincing several state legislatures to decriminalize penalties for the possession of minor amounts of marijuana. The report was later cited in 1977 by then-President Jimmy Carter, who argued before Congress: "Penalties against drug use should not be more damaging to the individual than the use of the drug itself. Nowhere is this more clear than in the laws against possession of marijuana in private for personal use."

NORML founder Keith Stroup said: "Governor Shafer was an honest public servant who -- when confronted with the evidence that it made no sense to treat responsible marijuana smokers as criminals -- had the courage to stand by his principles, despite enormous pressure from the Nixon administration to modify his views and the commission's recommendations for political ends. To this day, The Marijuana Commission still stands as the most comprehensive governmental study of this subject ever undertaken."

Full text of the 1972 Shafer Commission report is available online at: <http://www.druglibrary.org/schaffer/Library/studies/nc/ncmenu.htm>.

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News From *your* local affiliate of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws

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NORML's Daily "AudioStash" Celebrates Six-Month Anniversary, Surpasses 775,000 Downloads

December 7, 2006 - Washington, DC, USA: More than 775,000 listeners have downloaded episodes of NORML's daily podcast since the program's launch six months ago, ranking the "AudioStash" as one of the most popular political audio programs available on the Internet.

More than 100 original 30-minute episodes of "NORML's Daily AudioStash: The Growing Truth About Marijuana" are now available on Apple's iTunes or online at: <http://www.normlaudiostash.com>. Featured guests on the show have included: PBS television host and NORML Advisory Board Member Rick Steves, New York Congressman Maurice Hinchey, comedian and NORML Advisory Board Member Tommy Chong, musical artists The Kottonmouth Kings, director Josh Gilbert, *Chicago Tribune* columnist Clarence Page, television producer and NORML Board of Directors member Ann Druyan, Santa Barbara City Councilman Das Williams, and former Seattle police chief and NORML Advisory Board Member Norm Stamper, among many others. Daily podcasts also feature breaking news, music, and political commentary. Archived interviews and episodes of the "AudioStash" are available for download online at: <http://www.normlaudiostash.com/archivetest.htm>.

"The popularity of NORML's daily podcast illustrates that there are large numbers of Americans who desire fact-based, educational information about marijuana and marijuana law reform, and that this population is increasingly turning to NORML and away from the federal government and the mass media in order to obtain it," said the show's producer Chris Goldstein.

NORML's "AudioStash" now averages over 40,000 downloads per week, often drawing a larger listenership than podcasts produced by the White House, New York Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, the US Council on Foreign Affairs, and the Pentagon.

For information on advertising on "NORML's Daily AudioStash," becoming a sponsor, or to inquire about being a featured guest of the show, please contact Chris Goldstein at: podcast@norml.org.

Diego v. San Diego NORML and the State of California, is available on the December 13, 2006 edition of NORML's daily AudioStash at: <http://www.normlaudiostash.com>.