



Teen Pot Use Falling in States With Medical Marijuana Laws

Washington, DC, USA:

States that have enacted legislation authorizing the use of medical cannabis by qualified patients have not experienced an increase in the drug's use by the general population, according to a report issued this week by the Marijuana Policy Project and co-authored by NORML Advisory Board Member Mitch Earleywine.

Among the twelve states that have legalized the use and cultivation of medical cannabis, all but one (New Mexico) have experienced an overall decline in teen marijuana use since the enactment of their medi-pot laws. (Data was unavailable for New Mexico, which passed its law last year.) In seven of the twelve states, marijuana use among young people declined at rates that exceeded the national average.

"Opponents of medical use of marijuana regularly argue that
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NORML Responds To Latest Marijuana And Brain Damage Fears

Washington, DC, USA: The results of a recent study reporting hippocampal volume reductions in long-term, heavy users of cannabis are based on only 15 cases, and are inconsistent with previously published research, NORML Deputy Director Paul Armentano said today.

The widely reported study, published this week in the journal *Archives of General Psychiatry*, found that chronic cannabis smokers (who averaged at least five joints per day for a period of 20 years) experience a measurable (via structural magnetic resonance imaging) reduction in the hippocampus and amygdala compared to non-users.

Commenting on the new study, Armentano said that although the exceptionally heavy use of cannabis may pose unique yet
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Scotland: Government Think-Tank Backs Taxing And Regulating Cannabis

Edinburgh, Scotland, UK: Taxing and regulating the sale of cannabis would reduce many of the social hazards associated with the use of pot and other illicit substances, according to a study released this week by the Scottish think-tank, Futures Forum. "Sending people to prison for low-level alcohol and drug-related crime is unproductive and ... unsustainable," the report concluded.

"There should be in place a new approach to regulation in Scotland and elsewhere, based on evidence, whereby regulation of all psychoactive substances - including currently illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, prescribed medicines and other legal drugs - will be governed by a single framework, which takes into account their different levels of potential risk."
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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!**

<continued from TEEN USE, page 1 > such laws 'send the wrong message to children,' but there is just no sign of that effect in the data," said Earleywine. "In every state for which there's data, teen marijuana use has gone down since the medical marijuana law was passed, often a much larger decline than nationally."

A previous 2005 review of medical cannabis laws and their impact on use reported similar findings, noting that teen use in California had fallen nearly 50 percent since the passage of that state's medi-pot law in 1996. A 2002 report by the General Accounting Office (GAO) concluded that state medical marijuana laws were operating primarily as voters and legislators had intended and had not led to widespread abuses among the general population. *For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500 or Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director,. Full text of the study, "Marijuana use by young people: the impact of state medical marijuana laws,"*

<continued from FEARS, page 1 > subtle health hazards, these potential risks are likely irrelevant to the overwhelming majority of cannabis consumers who use the drug in moderation.

"While these preliminary results are a cause of concern, they must be replicated in a much larger sample size before we can begin making any determinations regarding whether there may exist a cause-and-effect relationship, or whether these results may hold any significance for the millions of Americans who consume cannabis on a far more limited basis," he said.

Armentano added that a previous assessment of long-term cannabis use on hippocampal volume found no adverse effects associated with marijuana use.

Numerous studies of cannabis use on neurocognitive abilities have also failed to indicate that marijuana use has residual adverse impacts on cognition.

Armentano concluded: "While we have known for decades that chronic alcohol use is toxic to the brain, this fact is not a justification for arresting and incarcerating the millions of Americans who enjoy a glass of wine or beer with dinner. As is the case with alcohol, the findings of this study – even if we are to take them at face value – are an argument in favor of legalization, education, and moderation – not criminal prohibition." *For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500 or Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: paul@norml.org.*

<continued from SCOTLAND, page 1 > The Forum recommended that this "new approach" should include a system for taxing and regulating cannabis sales - arguing that legalizing the drug would sever its association with other illicit substances.

The Forum's recommendations come just weeks after British Home Secretary Jacqui Smith and Prime Minister Gordon Brown announced plans to reclassify cannabis to a Class B 'hard' drug. Upgrading cannabis' classification would increase the penalties for minor pot possession from a verbal warning (under current law) to up to five years in jail.

The Futures Forum is a body of experts created by the Scottish Parliament to advise legislators on various public policy issues, including drug and alcohol abuse.

A spokesperson for the Scottish government criticized the report's findings, saying that there is "no reasonable case" for legalizing cannabis.

For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500 or Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: paul@norml.org. Full text of the report, "Approaches to Alcohol and Drugs in Scotland: A Question of Architecture," is available online at:

www.scotlandfutureforum.org/assets/files/report.pdf

Medical Pot Use Not Associated with "Serious" Side Effects, Study Says

Montreal, Canada, CAN: The medical use of cannabis is not associated with serious negative side effects, according to a meta-analysis published this week in the journal of the Canadian Medical Association (CMAJ).

Investigators at McGill University Health Centre and McGill University in Montreal and the University of British Columbia in Vancouver reviewed 23 clinical investigations of medicinal cannabinoid drugs (typically oral THC or liquid cannabis extracts) and eight observational studies conducted between 1966 and 2007. Authors concluded that subjects given medical cannabis experienced a slightly higher risk of experiencing "nonserious adverse events," specifically dizziness, compared to non-using controls.

By contrast, investigators "did not find a higher incidence rate of serious adverse events associated with medical cannabinoid use." Responding to the study, NORML Deputy Director Paul Armentano said: "Cannabinoids possess a safety profile that is unmatched by virtually every other available prescription drug or over-the-counter medication, including aspirin. To think that almost no serious adverse side effects have been associated with drug's medicinal use over a 30-year period is remarkable. What other medications can make such a claim?"

For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director. Full text of the study, "Adverse effects of medical cannabinoids: a systematic review," appears in the Canadian Medical Association Journal.

Drug Czar Responds to NORML's Refutation of "Potent Pot" Claim

Washington, DC, USA: NORML's criticism of an Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) report alleging that the average strength of cannabis is now at an all-time high has drawn a heated response from the Drug Czar's office. NORML's critique, which appeared in an essay on the HuffingtonPost.com as well as in select newspapers, countered the White

House's claim that today's marijuana averages 9.6 percent THC (pot's primary psychoactive component) or is particularly dangerous to health. Armentano wrote, "[B]y the University of Mississippi's (which conducted the study) own admission, the average THC in domestically grown marijuana - which comprises the bulk of the US market - is less than five percent, a figure that's remained unchanged for nearly a decade." He continued, "THC - regardless of potency - is non-toxic and incapable of causing a fatal overdose. Currently, doctors may legally prescribe a FDA-approved pill that contains 100 percent THC, and curiously, nobody at the University of Mississippi or at the Drug Czar's office seems particularly concerned about it."

Armentano concluded, "If lawmakers ... were really concerned about potential risks posed by potent marijuana, they would support regulating the drug, so that its potency would be known to the consumer."

The Drug Czar's office responded to NORML's criticisms on their Pushing Back website by falsely accusing NORML of seeking to "legalize [all illegal] drugs." The ONDCP also argued, oddly, that the data cited in their report regarding the average potency of domestically seized pot was likely inaccurate.

"Name me another agency that publishes data, but then denies the validity of said data the moment somebody highlights it," Armentano said. "This sort of slipshod research would receive a failing grade on a high-school term paper. It's an embarrassment that the most well-funded drug policy agency in America would engage in such an admitted act of duplicity."

NORML's Deputy Director and Drug Czar John Walters continued their debate on Wednesday on the nationally syndicated Dr. Drew Pinsky radio show. *For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, For full text of NORML's essay, "Don't buy the potent pot hype," visit -*

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/paul-armentano/dont-buy-the-potent-pot-h_b_107458.html

Pot Prohibition Linked To More Potent Marijuana Use, Study Says

Santa Cruz, CA, USA: Adults who live in areas where marijuana is criminally prohibited are more likely to report a preference for stronger strains of pot as compared to adults who live in areas where the sale of the drug is legally regulated, according to survey data to be published in the forthcoming issue of the *International Journal of Drug Policy*.

An investigator at the University of California at Santa Cruz randomly surveyed the marijuana use patterns of more than 400 experienced cannabis consumers in San Francisco and Amsterdam. The survey reported that respondents in Amsterdam, where the sale of small quantities of cannabis is regulated in retail stores, were significantly more likely than those in San Francisco to prefer "mild" and "moderate" cannabis over "strong" or "very strong" varieties.

"[B]ecause the cannabis markets in San Francisco remain illicit, users are more apt to feel they can never be certain of potency and so are more likely to choose stronger strains," the study reported. By contrast, "In Amsterdam three decades of *de facto* decriminalization have fostered a stable and translucent retail cannabis market in which users are reliably able to buy cannabis of the potency they prefer."

Over two-thirds of respondents in both cities reported that they moderated their use of cannabis depending its potency – typically consuming lesser quantities of stronger pot. Survey respondents in both Amsterdam and San Francisco said that the price of cannabis had little impact on their use, suggesting that "policies designed to reduce aggressive demand for cannabis ... by increasing its price are unlikely to have a large impact."

Respondents in both cities also reported that they perceived their risk of being arrested for using marijuana to be "very unlikely." Respondents in both cities reported that they could obtain cannabis within "a few hours,"

though those who lived in San Francisco were far more likely to report that they obtained their marijuana from "friends."

Age of onset, age at first regular use, and age at the start of periods of maximum use were "nearly identical" in both cities. By contrast, marijuana users in Amsterdam were far less likely than users in San Francisco to have experimented with other illicit drugs, including cocaine, crack, methamphetamine, ecstasy, and opiates.

"The differences in response patterns between samples of experienced users in different legal-policy milieux suggest that various aspects of drug policy interact in complex ways with both user cultures and the broader cultures in which they are situated," the study concluded. "But the fact that we found more similarities than differences across the contrasting drug control regimes provides further support for the view that cannabis use is a deeply embedded cultural practice that is not easily reached by drug policy."

For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500 or Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: paul@norml.org. Full text of the study, "Cannabis policies and user practices: Markey separation, price, potency, and accessibility in Amsterdam and San Francisco," will appear in the International Journal of Drug Policy.

New Zealand: Most Pot Consumers Not Frequent Users

Wellington, New Zealand, NZ: Cannabis consumers use pot with far less frequency than do users of other illicit substances, according to a report released this week by a New Zealand economic research group. The report found that over 373,000 New Zealanders use cannabis, but that only 17 percent of them consume the drug frequently. By contrast, 36 percent of those who use methamphetamine and 88 percent of those who used cocaine were reported to be frequent users.

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<continued from previous page> Of the illicit drugs used by New Zealanders, cannabis was by far the most popular. By comparison, fewer than 40,000 New Zealanders used cocaine and less than 23,000 reported using methamphetamine.

Commenting on the report, NORML Deputy Director Paul Armentano said, "It is telling that despite pot's prevalence, availability, and popularity, relatively few users consume it regularly. Clearly, these statistics undermine the US government's claim that cannabis is a particularly addictive drug or a supposed 'gateway' to the use of other illicit substances."

For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500 or Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director.

California: County Officials Finalize Mendocino Vote Count, Mendocino County Voters Restrict Pot Possession Rules

Ukiah, CA, USA: Mendocino County voters narrowly decided to repeal an eight-year-old county law that legalized the possession of up to 25 marijuana plants, election officials affirmed this week. After tabulating over 11,000 additional absentee ballots, county officials confirmed the June 3rd election result in favor of initiative Measure B - which passed 52% to 48%.

Passage of the new county law seeks to cap the number of plants adults may legally possess at six. However, activists are expected to challenge the validity of the law in court, arguing that a recent state District Court of Appeals decision prohibits municipalities from imposing limits on the quantity of marijuana patients may possess under state law. California NORML, which had opposed the repeal effort, called the result a "moral victory," noting that the campaign's proponents had predicted that the measure would pass by more than 60 percent of the vote.

"The passage of Measure B settles nothing,"

said California NORML Coordinator Dale Gieringer. "Measure B ... seeks to establish the same state limits for marijuana growing that were recently declared unconstitutional [by] the California appeals court, ... It's major enforcement provision is invalid, and it contains nothing that addresses the real problems of large-scale criminal cultivation. Measure B's validity will be subject to ... immediate court challenges. The county needs to go back to the drawing board."

For more information, please contact Dale Gieringer, California NORML Coordinator, at: (415) 563-5858.

Cannabis Agonist Reduces Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma Tumor Growth, Study Says

Stockholm, Sweden, EUR: The administration of the cannabinoid agonist R(+)-MA halts the spread and growth of cancerous tumors in animals with non-Hodgkin lymphoma, according to preclinical data published in the current issue of the International Journal of Cancer. Investigators at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm reported that mice treated with R(+)-MA experienced a 40 percent reduction in tumor weight.

"The anti-proliferative and proapoptotic (stimulated cell death) effects of cannabinoids make the endocannabinoid system a potential new therapeutic target for individualized therapy in lymphomas," authors concluded.

Earlier this year, the journal Cancer Research reported that the administration of cannabinoids halts the spread of a wide range of cancers, including prostate cancer, breast cancer, lung cancer, pancreatic cancer, and brain cancer.

NORML Deputy Director Paul Armentano has a review of pot's anti-cancer properties online at the Huffington Post.

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For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director. Full text of the study, "Expression of cannabinoid receptors: type 1 and type 2 in non-Hodgkin lymphoma Growth inhibition by receptor activation," appears in the September issue of the *International Journal of Cancer*.

Oral Pot Preparation Effective For Depression, Journal Reports

Vienna, Austria, EUR: Oral administration of synthetic THC capsules (dronabinol) mitigates symptoms of depression in patients seeking clinical treatment, according to a pair of case studies published in the June issue of *Cannabinoids*, the journal of the International Association for Cannabis as Medicine (IACM, Germany). A general practitioner in Vienna, Austria reported two cases of patients using dronabinol to improve depression and a sense of feeling overwhelmed. For the first patient, a 48-year-old female, dronabinol administered up to four times daily relieved the severity and frequency of her chronic depression and improved her quality of life. For the second patient, a 22-year-old female, daily administration of up to 10mg of dronabinol was associated with a "significant improvement of her depressive condition."

Overall, the author reported that 80 percent of the patients he had treated with dronabinol between 2003 and 2006 had experienced a "swift improvement" with oral cannabinoids. "The presented observations suggest that dronabinol has an antidepressive potential that can readily be used in medical practice," the author concluded. "To date no clinical studies have studied primarily the effectiveness of cannabinoids for the treatment of depression. In my opinion, such studies are desirable and promising."

For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director. Full text of the study, "Treating depression with cannabinoids," is at:

www.cannabis-med.org/english/journal/en_2008_02_2.pdf

Portable Oral-Fluid Tests Still Unreliable for Pot, Study Says

Ghent, Belgium, EUR: Saliva testing is neither a "practical" nor a "reliable" way for detecting the past use of cannabis, according to a scientific review published in the journal *Therapeutic Drug Monitoring*. "Reliable point-of-care drug testing is still problematic, especially for cannabinoids and benzodiazepines," authors determined. "To date, there is no device that allows both reliable and practical point-of-care testing."

A 2007 review of ten oral fluid devices reached a similar conclusion. Of the ten devices tested, six recorded either false negative or false positive test results for marijuana's primary psychoactive compound THC. Five devices also recorded false positive results for the presence of marijuana's primary inactive metabolite, carboxy-THC (THC-COOH).

Previous evaluations of onsite oral fluid tests have also determined the technology to be unreliable for detecting recent cannabis use, particularly when administered at roadside checkpoints. Several European nations and a handful of US states are evaluating the use of such devices by law enforcement to identify motorists who may be driving under the influence of marijuana or other controlled substances. For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: paul@norml.org. Full text of the study, "Current developments in drug testing in oral fluid," appears in the April issue of *Therapeutic Drug Monitor*.

California: Attorney General to appeal Kelly Decision

San Francisco, CA, USA: State Attorney General Jerry Brown announced last week that he will challenge a recent Court of Appeals decision that prohibits legislators from imposing limits on the amount of medical marijuana patients may legally possess under state law.

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

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The decision (People v. Kelly) struck down a 2004 law that sought to amend the California's voter-approved initiative, Proposition 215, which legalized the possession, use, and cultivation of specified quantities of medical cannabis. In 2003, the California Legislature approved guidelines establishing a statewide cap on the amount of cannabis patients may possess. Last month, the California Court of Appeals ruled that the legislature lacked the constitutional authority to amend a law that had been enacted by the voters.

The Court determined: "The Legislature's imposition of quantity limits in section 11362.77 ... amends [Proposition 215.] Section 11362.77 imposes a numeric cap where [Proposition 215] imposed none. ... [Proposition 215's failure to specify] reasonable and established quantity guidelines ... may be a valid concern. Nevertheless, it is a concern that cannot be addressed by the Legislature acting without the voter's approval."

Brown said that the 1996 voter-approved initiative was ambiguous and that the Legislature's amendment was a reasonable effort to clarify it. "The proposition is not as clear as we would like," Brown told the Los Angeles Times. "You do not need an unlimited quantity of marijuana for medicine. But what is the quantity?"

Brown said that he supports the spirit of Proposition 215, but believes that limitations must be imposed by the legislature in order to curb potential abuses by drug traffickers and provide guidelines for law enforcement. *For more information, please contact Keith Stroup, NORML Legal Counsel, at (202) 483-5500. Full text of the California Court of Appeals decision, People v. Kelly.*

*** NOTE! The Willamette Valley NORML Public meeting * Happens every 4th Sat. of the month and will be at**

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1210 Willamette St,
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