



## Medical Professionals Get Credits for National Clinical Conference on Cannabis Therapeutics

**NURSES and other Medical Professionals can obtain professional education credits for learning about the scientific evidence supporting the therapeutic use of cannabis from researchers from across the U.S. and around the world. The Fourth National Clinical Conference on Cannabis Therapeutics, which will be held in Santa Barbara, CA on April 6-8, 2006, is an accredited conference, so attendees are eligible for Continuing Medical Education credits, among others. CMEs from USCF; also CEUs for RNs, LVNs, MFTs and Reg.P. / pharm. D. available.**

Past educational credits for the work of this national group have been granted by the **Oregon Department of Human Services**, Health Services and the **Oregon Nurses Association**, The Colleges of Nursing and Medicine of The University of Iowa, The Virginia Nurses Association, The University of Virginia's Schools of Medicine, Nursing and Law among other conservative professional health care organizations.

< continued pg 3 >

### V.A. Nurse Investigated for 'Sedition' After Writing Letter to Editor

NEW YORK Sen. Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.) has asked Veterans Affairs Secretary James Nicholson for a thorough inquiry of his agency's investigation into whether a V.A. nurse's letter to the editor criticizing the Bush administration amounted to "sedition."

Merely opposing government policies and expressing a desire to change course "does not provide reason to believe that a person is involved in illegal subversive activity," he said. Bingaman said such investigations raise "a very real possibility of chilling legitimate political speech."

Laura Berg, a clinical nurse specialist for 15 years, wrote a letter in September to a weekly Albuquerque newspaper criticizing how the administration handled Hurricane Katrina and the Iraq War. She urged people to "act forcefully" by bringing criminal charges against top administration officials, including the president, to remove them from power because they played

< continued pg 4 >

### NURSES Stand Up For Patients in Support of MEDICAL MARIJUANA

Medical marijuana scored a major public health victory in when the American Nurses Association (ANA) adopted the resolution calling for research, education and supervised use of medical marijuana.

The ANA is America's largest nursing association; it has hundreds of thousands of members, with chapters in 49 states. Its support of medical marijuana is a direct challenge to drug warriors, government-funded researchers, and Supreme Court rulings that have asserted that marijuana is a harmful drug with no medical value.

The ANA now joins dozens of other health professional organizations, including the National Society of Nurses on Addiction and the American Public Health Association, in calling for eased access to medical marijuana.

< continued pg 4 >



**The MERCY News Report** is an all-volunteer, not-for-profit project to record and broadcast news, announcements and information about medical cannabis.

For more information about the MERCY News, contact us.

*Snail Mail:*

**The MERCY News**  
1675 Fairgrounds Rd.,  
Salem, Oregon, 97303  
503-363-4588

*E-mail:*

**Mercy\_Salem@hotmail.com**

*our WWW page:*

**www.MercyCenters.org**

*Check it out!*

The MERCY News Report is produced by virtue of the expense and energy of the members and staff of MERCY, the



# About MERCY

MERCY is a not-for-profit, grass roots organization founded by patients, their friends and family and other compassionate and concerned citizens in the area and is dedicated to helping and advocating for those involved with the Oregon Medical Marijuana Program (OMMP). MERCY is based in the Salem area and staffed on a volunteer basis.

The purpose is to get medicine to patients in the short-term while working with them to establish their own independent sources. To this end they provide, among other things, ongoing education to clinics, individual physicians and other healthcare providers about the OMMP, cannabis as medicine and doctor rights in general.

MERCY wants to be a strong patient advocate, which can manifest itself in a variety of ways. One of these has been maintaining lines of communication with other patient advocates and the OMMP director and workers, which we are trying to do.. At the same time we attempt Doctor education and support programs, and Patient and Caregiver projects like learning to grow and different methods for consumption. These are especially important for the first time medical cannabis user as well as those unable to apply their medication.

During the past year MERCY has assisted a number of people in getting into the OMMP as well as helping them find access to excess medicine. Through the above actions, MERCY intends to build a volunteer base for constant recruitment & administration of the organization for the future. Through marketing and communications we hope to coordinate with business and organizations to make a lasting, positive change in the community.

The mission of the organization is to help people and change the laws so that action like this isn't necessary any more. We advocate reasonable, fair and effective marijuana laws and policies, and strive to educate, register and empower voters to implement such policies. Our philosophy is one of teaching people to fish, rather than being dependent upon others. Lasting change will require that each citizen be active enough to register and effectively vote. You, and only you, the people, can make it happen. We will help in any way we can, but you have to tell us what you need. Work with us to make this your "tool shed", or resource guide, to successful medical cannabis utilization and activism.

## Monthly Meetings and Office Hours

One of the missions of MERCY is to establish regular get-togethers in each community where the are (or will be!) medical cannabis patients. The purpose is to get patients networking and self-sufficient within their neighborhoods, assist those seeking information about the OMMP and pass on (or pick up!) action items of interest to the group. **Next ones happen Thursday - March 30, April 27 and May 25, 2006**

**!SORRY!** We REALLY do want to help everybody as much as they feel they need it. **BUT** the expenses of maintaining the resources - just being there - has caught up with the starting poverty level of the organizers. Therefore, a **\$20 Day Use fee** is being instituted for use of MERCY facilities at **Monthly meetings, Office hours and such.** We will still accommodate the public and cardholders with their registration issues for (dumb looks still) free!, of course.

<continued from "GET CREDITS", pg 1> This conference will present state of the art cannabis research with faculty from the US, England, Canada, Spain, Israel, and the Netherlands. Areas to be discussed include the use of cannabis for pain management, multiple sclerosis, mental health problems, cancer, glaucoma; use during pregnancy; an overview of the endogenous cannabinoids and their role in the human body; harm reduction measures and policy updates. Providing Patients Safe Access to Therapeutic Marijuana / Cannabis, which encourages the education of registered nurses regarding current, evidence-based therapeutic use of marijuana/cannabis.

Patients' therapeutic cannabis use has always been supported by the academic and medical communities, which have publicly in large numbers called for the immediate access to cannabis under medical supervision," said Nurse Mathre. A list of such organizations can be found at <<http://www.medicalcannabis.com>>, or see below.

More information on the conference agenda, faculty, registration, and how to obtain Continuing Education credits is available at: <http://www.medicalcannabis.com/conference.htm>

There are other sparks that are igniting interest in the medical cannabis debate.

For example, "The Petition to Reschedule Cannabis" was submitted to the DEA in October of 2004. This demand was forwarded with merit to their boss, the Department of Health and Human Services in the fall of 2004 and has been under review by that organization since that time. This is a 60 plus page document that lists about 50,000 pages of worldwide research on the therapeutic use of cannabis. The approval of this demand would end the war on cannabis. In a political sense the Petition is every politicians dream. The announcement that research on cannabis has progressed to the point that it can be returned to the National Pharmacopeia, will be accomplished by scientists, and rescheduled by bureaucrats and not one elected official has to vote on the finding. Patients Out of Time is a principal in that filing.

Many think that the finding demanded by the Petition, that cannabis is medicine, is inevitable.

REMEMBER to Spread the Word, Every Nurse and Medical Professional You Know! The Fourth National Conference on Cannabis Therapeutics (NCCCT) will be an accredited conference as has all in the series, meaning attendees who will be medical doctors and registered nurses in the main, will get professional education credits for their attendance. Credit granted by such far out liberal institutions, such as previous education grantees, the Medical College of the University of Iowa; the Oregon Department of Human Services, Health Services; and the Pain Management Center, Department of Anesthesia, University of Virginia School of Medicine. This means nothing we suppose to the layman but to those that advocate for patient use of cannabis under medical supervision it is a enlightening and uplifting series of forums. Conferences that the federals do not want you to know about or write about and therefore never, ever discuss.

Maybe you should come to Santa Barbara next April to find out why. Please see [www.medicalcannabis.com](http://www.medicalcannabis.com) for more details. For more info on the Petition to Reschedule Cannabis, The NCCCT or Patients Out of Time (PoT) you can Contact:

Al Byrne, co-founder  
Patients Out of Time  
1472 Fish Pond Rd.  
Howardsville, VA 24562  
(434) 263-4484 fax (434) 263-6753  
[al@medicalcannabis.com](mailto:al@medicalcannabis.com)  
[www.medicalcannabis.com](http://www.medicalcannabis.com)

Patients Out of Time is a patient advocacy organization with a universal constituency. They support the rights of patients to have a legal and safe access to the therapeutic use of cannabis.

The mission of their organization, a 501 (c) 3 non-profit, is the education of health care professionals and the public about the therapeutic use of cannabis. Their leadership is composed of medical and nursing professionals with expertise in the clinical applications of cannabis and five of the seven patients (two

wish to remain anonymous) who receive their medical cannabis from the US government. Working closely since 1990, the Founders formalized their work in 1995 as a VA corporation.

**Patients Out of Time is seeking a Registered Nurse willing to defend the federal government's position that cannabis (marijuana) has no medical value.**

After a year of searching, Patients Out of Time has not found a single nurse who disagrees with the American Nurses Association (and thirteen other state nursing associations) position that cannabis is medicine and who can scientifically disprove that position to an audience of peers. For more, Visit:

<http://www.medicalcannabis.com/>

< continued from **SEDITION**, pg 1 > games of "vicious deceit." She added: "This country needs to get out of Iraq now and return to our original vision and priorities of caring for land and people and resources rather than killing for oil....Otherwise, many more of us will be facing living hell in these times."

The agency seized her office computer and launched an investigation. Berg is not talking to the press, but reportedly fears losing her job.

Bingaman wrote: "In a democracy, expressing disagreement with the government's actions does not amount to sedition or insurrection. It is, and must remain, protected speech. Although it may be permissible to implement restrictions regarding a government employee's political activities during work hours or on government premises, such employees do not surrender their right to freedom of speech when they enlist in government service."

He said he wants the matter investigated so V.A. officials will have guidance about handling similar situations in the future.

Berg signed the letter as a private citizen, and the V.A. had no reason to suspect she used government resources to write it, according to the American Civil Liberties Union of New Mexico, which last week asked the government to apologize to Berg for seizing her computer and investigating her.

V.A. human resources chief Mel Hooker had said in a Nov. 9 letter that his agency was obligated to investigate "any act which potentially represents sedition," the ACLU said.

Peter Simonson, executive director of the ACLU of New Mexico, told The Progressive magazine: "We were shocked to see the word 'sedition' used. Sedition? That's like something out of the history books."

In a press release, Simonson also said: "Is this government so jealous of its power, so fearful of dissent, that it needs to threaten people who openly oppose its policies with charges of 'sedition'?"

Story by E&P Staff. Published: February 11, 2006,

Find this article at:

[http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/news/article\\_display.jsp?vnu\\_content\\_id=1001995631&imw=Y](http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/news/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1001995631&imw=Y)

< continued from **NURSES**, pg 1 > The measure overwhelmingly adopted by the nurses resolves that the ANA will:

- \* Support research in controlled investigational trials on the therapeutic efficacy of marijuana/cannabis, including alternative methods of administration.

- \* Support the right of patients to have safe access to therapeutic marijuana/cannabis under appropriate prescriber supervision.

- \* Support the ability of health care providers to discuss and/or recommend the medicinal use of marijuana without the threat of intimidation or penalization.

- \* Support legislation to remove criminal penalties including arrest and imprisonment for bona fide patients and prescribers of therapeutic marijuana/cannabis.

- \* Support federal and state legislation to exclude marijuana/ cannabis from classification as a Schedule I drug.

- \* Support and encourage the education of registered nurses regarding current, evidence-based therapeutic use of marijuana/ cannabis.

< continued next page >



## **Nursing Association Journal Backs Access to Medical Marijuana**

**May 2, 2001 - New York, NY, USA.**

Marijuana is a safe and effective medication and nurses should support legal access to it, asserts a commentary in the April issue of the American Journal of Nursing, the official journal of the American Nursing Association (ANA).

"Patients need professional guidance about the safe administration of cannabis, and they need access to a legal and unadulterated supply," concludes the article, entitled "Therapeutic Cannabis: A patient advocacy issue." An estimated 2.5 million nurses nationwide receive the publication. Visit:

[http://www.norml.org/index.cfm?Group\\_ID=4292](http://www.norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=4292)

## **National Nurses Society on Addictions**

### **POSITION PAPER**

### **Access to Therapeutic Cannabis**

Seriously ill individuals are suffering because of the prohibitory federal policies which list cannabis (marijuana) as a Schedule I drug of the Controlled Substances, which means it cannot be used by patients or prescribed by physicians.

### **Therapeutic Value**

Cannabis has been used medicinally throughout the world for centuries. Cannabis contains more than 60 cannabinoids which are unique to the cannabis plant, one of which is delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the main psychoactive cannabinoid. However it appears to be the combination of various cannabinoids which seem to have the greater therapeutic value.

### **Support for Therapeutic Cannabis**

Thirty five states, have recognized marijuana's therapeutic potential and have passed legislation supporting its value. Therapeutic use of cannabis/marijuana is also supported by several organizations including the Alliance for Cannabis Therapeutics, the American Medical Student Association, the California Medical Association, Mothers Against Misuse and Abuse (MAMA), the National Lymphoma Foundation, the National Association of Attorneys General, Patients Out of Time, Physicians for AIDS care, and the Virginia Nurses Association.

## **Illinois Nurses Back Medical Marijuana Bill**

### **INA Joins Legislator Living with AIDS in Drive to Protect Patients**

FEBRUARY 3, 2005 - SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS - The 6,000-member Illinois Nurses Association (INA) has lent its support to legislation introduced by Rep. Larry McKeon (D-Chicago) to permit seriously ill patients to use and possess medical marijuana with their doctor's recommendation, without fear of arrest or jail under Illinois state law. The bill, HB 0407, has been referred to the Human Services Committee. Visit:

<http://www.mpp.org/releases/nr20050203.html>

## **Scottish NURSES SET TO BACK USE OF CANNABIS**

**Nurses are joining the fight to get cannabis products prescribed for patients. The move follows concern that people with conditions such as multiple sclerosis and cancer are not getting adequate pain relief from traditional treatments.**

A motion calling for patients to be prescribed the drugs has been put forward by the Royal College of Nursing's Pain Forum and will be debated at the RCN's annual conference in Bournemouth this week.

Celia Manson, an RCN adviser, said nurses were concerned about the restrictions on current cannabis-derived products which could benefit so many people. "Few doctors are able to prescribe them at the moment. Nurses from the Pain Forum feel there is potential for much greater use and these should at the very least be investigated."

Last year at its annual conference the British Medical Association voted for cannabis derivatives to be legalised for medical purposes. The BMA drew up a report which showed cannabinoids had potential for therapeutic use in a number of conditions including MS, spinal chord injury, stroke and spastic disorders. Visit:

[http://www.marijuananeews.com/marijuananeews/cowan/scottish\\_nurses\\_to\\_back\\_medical .htm](http://www.marijuananeews.com/marijuananeews/cowan/scottish_nurses_to_back_medical.htm)

### Other Endorsements

#### More Organizations Supporting Access to Therapeutic Cannabis Every Day

Opponents of medical marijuana law reform often argue that few or no health authorities recognize cannabis as a legitimate therapeutic agent. Most recently, this notion was repeated by DEA Director Asa Hutchinson, who stated, "We all have sympathy for folks that need medication, but we have to listen to the scientific and medical community, and they're saying that marijuana has no legitimate medical purpose." This contention, however, is altogether untrue. In reality, numerous health and medical organizations from both the United States and abroad support the use of marijuana as a medicine.

The following list is just a sampling of the various health and scientific organizations that back patient access to medical marijuana. It is intended to provide a cross-section of the medical community's broad support for medical cannabis, and present a referenced, fact-based response to those who claim otherwise. As the medical cannabis issue continues to stimulate political debate, reformers and legislators need to consider the positions of the medical community to better make informed policy

decisions regarding the medical use of marijuana.

#### Some of the State and Local Health Organizations Supporting Immediate Legal Access to Medical Marijuana

- Alaska Nurses Association - 1998
- California Academy of Family Physicians - 1996
- California Pharmacists Association - 1997
- California Medical Association - 1994
- California Nurses Association - 1995
- Colorado Nurses Association - 1995
- Connecticut Nurses Association - 2004
- Florida Governor's Red Ribbon Panel on AIDS - 1993
- Florida Medical Association - 1997
- Hawaii Nurses Association - 1999
- Illinois Nurses Association - 2005
- Los Angeles County AIDS Commission - 1996
- Maine AIDS Alliance - 1997
- Medical Society of the State of New York - 2004
- Minnesota Nurses Association
- Mississippi Nurses Association - 1995
- New Jersey State Nurses Association
- New Mexico Medical Society
- New Jersey Nurses Association - 2002
- New Mexico Medical Society - 2001
- New Mexico Nurses Association - 1997
- New York State Nurses Association - 1995
- North Carolina Nurses Association - 1996
- New Mexico Nurses Association
- San Francisco Mayor's Summit on AIDS and HIV
- San Francisco Medical Society - 1996
- Texas Nurses Association - 2005
- Virginia Nurses Association - 1994, 2004
- Virginia Nurses Society on Addictions - 1993
- Wisconsin Public Health Association - 1999
- Wisconsin Nurses Association - 1999

#### More. A sampling of the International and National Organizations and People Supporting Immediate Legal Access to Medical Marijuana

- AIDS Treatment News
- Alliance for Cannabis Therapeutics - 1981
- American Academy of Family Physicians - 1989, 1995
- American Medical Students Association - 1993

< continued next page >

American Nurses Association - 2003  
 American Preventive Medical Association - 1997  
 American Public Health Association (APHA) - 1995  
 American Society of Addiction Medicine - 2000  
 Association of Nurses in AIDS Care - 1999  
 Cannabis Freedom Fund - 1996  
 Cure AIDS now - 1991  
 Farmacy - 1999  
 Federation of American Scientists - 1994  
 Institute of Medicine - 1982 & 1999  
 International Cannabis Alliance of Researchers  
 and Educators (I-CARE) - 1992  
 Kaiser Permanente - 1997  
 Lancet - 1997  
 Life Extension Foundation - 1997  
 Lymphoma Foundation of America - 1997  
 National Association for Public Health Policy - 1998  
 National Association of People with AIDS - 1992  
 National Academy of Sciences Institute Of  
 Medicine (IOM)  
 New England Journal of Medicine  
 National Nurses Society on Addictions (NNSA)- 1995  
 New England Journal of Medicine - 1997  
 Patients Out of Time - 1995  
 Physicians Association for AIDS Care

Arthritis Research Campaign (United Kingdom)  
 Australian Medical Association (New South  
 Wales) Limited  
 Australian National Task Force on Cannabis  
 Belgian Ministry of Health  
 British House of Lords Select Committee on  
 Science and Technology  
 British House of Lords Select Committee On  
 Science and Technology (Second Report)  
 British Medical Association  
 French Ministry of Health  
 Health Canada  
 Multiple Sclerosis Society (Canada)  
 Netherlands Ministry of Health  
 New South Wales (Australia) Parliamentary  
 Working Party on the Use of Cannabis for  
 Medical Purposes

Dr. Dean Edell (surgeon and nationally  
 syndicated radio host)

Dr. Andrew Weil (nationally recognized  
 professor of internal medicine and founder of  
 the National Integrative Medicine Council)

**The following organizations are signatories to a June 2001 letter to the US Department of Health petitioning the federal government to "allow people suffering from serious illnesses ... to apply to the federal government for special permission to use marijuana to treat their symptoms."**

Addiction Treatment Alternatives  
 AIDS Treatment Initiatives (Atlanta, GA)  
 American Public Health Association  
 American Preventive Medical Association  
 Bay Area Physicians for Human Rights (San  
 Francisco, CA)  
 California Legislative Council for Older  
 Americans  
 Embrace Life (Santa Cruz, CA)  
 Gay and Lesbian Medical Association  
 Hepatitis C Action and Advisory Coalition  
 Life Extension Foundation  
 Maine AIDS Alliance  
 National Association of People with AIDS  
 National Association for Public Health Policy  
 National Women's Health Network  
 Nebraska AIDS Project  
 New York City AIDS Housing Network  
 Ohio Patient Network  
 Okaloosa AIDS Support and Information  
 Services (Fort Walton, FL)  
 Physicians for Social Responsibility (Oregon) -  
 1998  
 San Francisco AIDS Foundation

**A Few of the Other Organizations and Groups Supporting Access to Therapeutic Cannabis**

Consumer Reports Magazine - 1997  
 National Association of Attorneys General - 1983  
 National Association of Criminal Defense  
 Lawyers (NACDL)  
 American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)  
 California-Pacific Annual Conference of the  
 United Methodist Church - 1996  
 Episcopal Church of the U.S. - 1982  
 Progressive National Baptist Convention - 2004  
 Unitarian Universalist Association - 2004  
 United Methodist Church - 2004

< continued next page >



## Organizations Supporting Research into Therapeutic Cannabis

- American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry - 2000
- American Cancer Society - 1997
- American Medical Association
- Association of Nurses in AIDS Care - 1999
- British Medical Journal
- California Medical Association - 1997
- California Society of Addiction Medicine - 1997
- Congress of Nursing Practice
- Council of Health Organizations - 1971
- Federation of American Scientists - 1995
- Gay and Lesbian Medical Association
- Medical Society of the State of New York - 2004
- National Institute of Health Workshop on the Medical Utility of Marijuana - 1997
- Northern New England Psychiatric Society
- Texas Democratic Convention - 2004
- Wisconsin State Medical Society - 1998
- Women of Reform Judaism - 2000

**AIDS Organizations.** The following organizations are signatories to a February 17, 1999 letter to the US Department of Health petitioning the federal government to "make marijuana legally available ... to people living with AIDS."

- AIDS Action Council - 1996, AIDS Foundation of Chicago, AIDS National Interfaith Network (Washington, DC), AIDS Project Arizona, AIDS Project Los Angeles, Being Alive: People with HIV/AIDS Action Committee (San Diego, CA) Boulder County AIDS Project (Boulder, CO)
- Colorado AIDS Project, Center for AIDS Services (Oakland, CA), Health Force: Women and Men Against AIDS (New York, NY), Latino Commission on AIDS, Mobilization Against AIDS (San Francisco, CA) Mothers Voices to End AIDS (New York, NY)
- National Latina/o Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual And Transgender Association, National Native American AIDS Prevention Center, Northwest AIDS Foundation People of Color Against AIDS Network (Seattle, WA) San Francisco AIDS Foundation Whitman-Walker Clinic (Washington, DC)

Visit:

[http://mercycenters.org/libry/i\\_Nurses.html](http://mercycenters.org/libry/i_Nurses.html)

... for all this info including links.

**South Dakotans for Safe Access (SDSA)** want you to try to imagine that you are constantly, or at least frequently, under assault by the worst pain or nausea you've ever experienced.

Imagine that no prescription medicine will alleviate your discomfort (or that the medicine that does destroys your liver or costs as much as a new car every year).

Then, imagine that you know of a naturally-occurring herb that will take the pain or nausea away, or at least reduce it to a tolerable level, with no bad side effects.

Then imagine that your local politicians will put you in jail if you try to obtain some of this medicine.

SDSA plans to put the issue of medical use of cannabis to South Dakota voters in the November 2006 general election. "The time has come ... The need is here."

**Contact:** Bob Newland, Director, South Dakotans for Safe Access, HC 89 Box 184A, Hermosa SD 57744 \* phone: 605-255-4032 or **visit:**

<http://www.hemphysis.net/safeaccess.htm>

Why should You donate to SDSA?

**Because they'll do good things with your money.** You probably get letters regularly, asking for some of your money so someone else can do good things with it. SDSA gets them frequently. Sometimes they send some money. Visit:

<http://www.sodaksafeaccess.org/goodthings.htm>

for more about how you can help.



