



Medical Marijuana Legalization

Not Associated With Increases In Youth Pot Use, Study Says

Providence, RI, USA: The enactment of state laws allowing for the limited use of cannabis by physician-authorized patients is [not associated](#) with increases in young people's self-reported use of the substance, according to survey data presented last week by researchers at the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association.

A team of investigators from Brown University in Rhode Island, Boston Medical Center, and the Oregon Health & Science University compared trends in adolescents' use of cannabis in the states of Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Rhode Island lawmakers [enacted](#) medical marijuana legislation in 2006 while Massachusetts' law does not allow for the legal use of the drug.

Based on their analysis of 32,570 students, investigators determined that while marijuana use was common throughout the study period, there were no statistically significant differences in teens' use of cannabis between the

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Members Of Congress Condemn Obama Administration's Crackdown On Medicinal Cannabis Providers

"No longer should the federal government's laws supersede the wishes of local citizens who have decided that their fellow neighbors ought ... to legitimately use medical marijuana"

Washington, DC, USA: Members of Congress are [urging](#) President Obama to halt the Justice Department's crackdown on California's medical cannabis providers and are calling on the

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Federal Lawsuit Seeks To Halt Obama Administration's Crackdown On California's Medical Cannabis Patients And Providers

San Francisco, CA, USA: Members of the [NORML Legal Committee](#), led by Matt Kumin and David Michael from San Francisco and Alan Silber from Roseland, NJ, [filed suit](#) on Monday against the federal government in an effort to halt the Obama administration's

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Survey: Cannabis Use Associated With Reduced Intake Of Prescription Drugs

Berkeley, CA, USA: Survey data collected from the members of a prominent Berkeley, California medical marijuana collective indicates that most patients reduce their intake of conventional medications following their initiation of cannabis therapy.

The [results](#) of an anonymous

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California Society Of Addiction Medicine Calls For The 'Constructive Regulation' Of Marijuana

San Francisco, CA, USA: The California [chapter](#) of the American Society of Addiction Medicines (ASAM) has issued a [paper](#) calling for the legalization and regulation of the adult use of cannabis.

The preliminary paper, entitled 'Youth First: Reconstructing Drug Policy,

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The MERCY News Report is an all-volunteer, not-for-profit project to record and broadcast news, announcements and information about medical cannabis in Oregon, across America and around the World.

For more information about the MERCY News, contact us.

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MERCY On The Tube!



in Salem, Oregon area thru Capital Community Television, Channel 23. Call In – 503.588-6444 - on Friday at 7pm, or See us on Wednesdays at 06:30pm, Thursdays at 07:00pm, Fridays at 10:30pm and Saturdays at 06:00pm. Visit –

<http://mercycenters.org/tv/>

About MERCY – The Medical Cannabis Resource Center

MERCY is a non-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, Oregon 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 we provide, among other things, ongoing education to people and groups organizing clinics and other Patient Resources, individual physicians and other healthcare providers about the OMMP, cannabis as medicine and doctor rights in general.

The mission of the organization is to help people and change the laws. 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.

Want to get your Card? Need Medicine Now?

Welcome to The Club! MERCY – the Medical Cannabis Resource Center hosts Mercy Club Meetings **every Wednesday** at - **1469 Capital Street NE, Suite #100, Salem, 97301** – from **7pm to 9pm** to help folks get their card, network patients to medicine, assist in finding a grower or getting to grow themselves, or ways and means to medicate along other info and resources depending on the issue. **visit** – www.MercyCenters.org - or Call **503.363-4588** for more.

The Doctor is In ... Salem! * MERCY is Educating

Doctors on signing for their Patients; Referring people to Medical Cannabis Consultations when their regular care physician won't sign for them; and listing all Clinics around the state in order to help folks Qualify for the OMMP and otherwise Get their Cards. For our Referral Doc in Salem, get your records to – **1469 Capital Street NE, Suite #100, Salem, 97301**, NOTE: There is a \$25 non-refundable deposit required. Transportation and Delivery Services available for those in need. For our Physician Packet to educate your Doctor, or a List of Clinics around the state, visit – www.MercyCenters.org - or Call **503.363-4588** for more.

Other Medical Cannabis Resource NetWork Opportunities for Patients as well as CardHolders-to-be. * whether Social meeting,

Open to public –or– Cardholders Only * visit: <http://mercycenters.org/events/Meets.html> ! Also Forums - a means to communicate and network on medical cannabis in Portland across Oregon and around the world. **A list of Forums, Chat Rooms, Bulletin Boards and other Online Resources for the Medical Cannabis Patient, CareGiver, Family Member, Patient-to-Be and Other Interested Parties. * Resources > Patients (plus) > Online > Forums** * Know any? Let everybody else know! Visit: <http://mercycenters.org/orgs/Forums.html> and Post It!

<continued from MEDICAL MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION and YOUTH POT USE, page 1 > two states in any year.

"Our study did not find increases in adolescent marijuana use related to Rhode Island's 2006 legalization of medical marijuana," [stated](#) the study's lead investigator in a press release.

Researchers at the Texas A&M Health Science center had previously published similar [findings](#), determining, "[C]onsistent with other studies of the liberalization of cannabis laws, medical cannabis laws do not appear to increase use of the drug."

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 CONGRESS PROTESTS, page 1 > Administration to reschedule the plant in recognition of its therapeutic utility.

On Friday, nine members of Congress -- Reps.

Steve Cohen (D-TN), Sam Farr (D-CA) Bob Filner (D-CA), Barbara Lee (D-CA), Jared Polis (D-CO), Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA), Pete Stark (D-CA), Mike Thompson (D-CA), and Lynn Woolsey (D-CA) --



sent a [letter](#) to the President "to express [their] concerns with the recent activity by the Department of Justice against legitimate medical cannabis dispensaries in California. [These] actions ... directly interfere with California's 15-year-old medical cannabis law by eliminating safe access to medication for the state's thousands of medical cannabis patients."

Earlier this month, United States Deputy Attorney General James Cole, along with the four US Attorneys from California, [announced](#) plans to escalate [federal prosecutorial efforts](#) targeting the state's medical cannabis dispensaries and providers. Since their announcement, US Attorneys have sent [eviction notices](#) to the landlords and the [financial institutions](#) of several cannabis providers throughout the state.

The Representatives' letter to Obama states: "During your presidential campaign you repeatedly pledged to end federal raids against the individuals and collectives authorized by state law to use or provide medical cannabis. ... By pursuing the same harsh policies that have been in place for years, we fear that the federal government will push legitimate patients back into the uncertainty and danger of the illicit market. For these reasons, it is more important now than ever to reschedule marijuana as a legitimate controlled substance for medicinal purposes. ... No longer should the federal government's laws supersede the wishes of local citizens who have decided that their fellow neighbors ought to have the right to legitimately use medical marijuana."

The letter concludes, "We respectfully request that your administration reschedule marijuana ... administratively, or publicly support the adoption of legislation that would change the federal statute to achieve this goal."

In July, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration formally [denied](#) a nine-year-old [petition](#) calling on the agency to initiate hearings to reassess the present classification of marijuana as a [schedule I](#) controlled substance without any 'accepted medical use in treatment.'

For more information, please contact Keith Stroup, NORML Legal Counsel, at: (202) 483-5500. The full text of the US House members letter to President Obama is available online at:

<http://big.assets.huffingtonpost.com/letter.pdf>.

<continued from LAWSUIT, page 1 > ongoing crackdown on medical cannabis producers and providers in California.

The [lawsuit](#), which was filed on behalf of various California patients, property owners, and cannabis dispensary operators, was brought simultaneously in all four federal districts in California -- San Francisco



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(Northern), Sacramento (Eastern) Los Angeles (Central), and San Diego (Southern). In recent weeks, US Attorneys have [threatened](#) to criminally and civilly prosecute Californians who operate medical cannabis facilities and to seize the property of those landlords who rent to dispensary owners.

Plaintiffs are seeking a temporary restraining order barring the Justice Department from taking further action against state-authorized patients and their providers. They [argue](#) that the government's actions are in violation of the Ninth, Tenth, and Fourteenth Amendments of the United States Constitution.

Plaintiffs also argue, using the theory of judicial estoppel, that the Justice Department had previously affirmed in federal court (*WAMM et al v. Eric Holder et al.*) that it would no longer use federal resources to prosecute cannabis patients or providers who are compliant with state law. Reversing that policy is tantamount to entrapment, the suit contends.

The defendants in the suits are Eric Holder, Attorney General of the United States, Michelle Leonhart, Administrator of the US Drug Enforcement Administration, and the US Attorneys from the four federal districts in California.

Justice Department officials have threatened to begin closing and prosecuting various California dispensary operations and/or their landlords this weekend.

A [separate constitutional challenge](#), filed last month on behalf of the organization Americans for Safe Access, is also pending. *For more information, please contact Keith Stroup, NORML Legal Counsel, at (202) 483-5500. Text of plaintiffs' complaint for declarative and injunctive relief is available online at: http://norml.org/pdf_files/brief_bank/2011_11_03_DOJ_Lit_Complaint_EDCA.pdf.*

<continued from CANNABIS USE ASSOCIATED WITH REDUCED INTAKE OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS, page 1 >
survey found that 66 percent of respondents said that they consumed cannabis as a prescription drug substitute. Many respondents

said that they health side effects than conventional medications.

Some 70 percent of respondents said that they used cannabis to treat a chronic condition, such as diabetes or arthritis. Just over half said they used marijuana for pain relief, including arthritis, migraines, and accident-related injuries.

Nearly three-quarters of respondents said that they possessed health insurance coverage. *For more information, please visit: <http://www.berkeleypatientsgroup.com/>.*

<continued from CALIFORNIA SOCIETY OF ADDICTION MEDICINE CALLS FOR THE 'CONSTRUCTIVE REGULATION' OF MARIJUANA, page 1 >
Regulating Marijuana, and Increasing Access to Treatment in California,' was initially presented at CSAM's State of the Art Conference in October.

It states: "Adolescents in California have easy access to purchasing and using marijuana. California's current medical marijuana laws have not had significant impact on access, and have made physicians de facto gatekeepers for access to both medical and recreational cannabis. CSAM therefore recommends that the best course at this point is to replace the current system of medical marijuana dispensaries and physician recommendations with a more strictly regulated system in which physicians are no longer gatekeepers for access, and fees and taxes from marijuana sales preferentially support education, prevention, and intervention for youth with marijuana-related problems."

Authors add: "A system of constructive regulation will assure that individuals are never jailed solely for possession or use of marijuana, more youth will be kept in school through community-based education, prevention and early intervention; and, referral to treatment will occur when needed. ... CSAM will support a system of marijuana regulation if sufficient funds from tax and fee revenues are



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CSAM's call for cannabis regulation follows a similar resolution issued last month by the California Medical Association that [recommended](#) lawmakers legalize and tax marijuana "in a manner similar to alcohol."

According to the *Associated Press*, board members at the American Society of Addiction Medicines [did not respond favorably](#) to CSAM's report, stating: "We oppose any changes in law and regulation that would lead to a sudden significant increase in the availability of any dependence-producing drug. This policy includes marijuana, a mood-altering drug capable of producing dependence as well as serious negative mental, emotional, behavioral and physical consequences."

For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500. Full text of CSAM's 'Youth First' report is available online at: https://www.csam-asam.org/fckfiles/csam_youth_first_draft-lo-res.pdf.

California: State Appeals Court Says Cities Can Ban Cannabis Dispensaries

Riverside, CA, USA: A three-judge panel of the 4th District Court of Appeals has [upheld](#) a citywide ordinance prohibiting the establishment of brick-and-mortar facilities that engage in the distribution of cannabis to state-authorized persons.

The judges [opined](#): "Riverside's zoning code ... states that any (activity) which is prohibited by state and/or federal law is strictly prohibited in Riverside. ... Where, as here, there is no clear indication of preemptive intent from the Legislature, we presume that Riverside's zoning regulations, in an area over which local government traditionally has exercised control, are not preempted by state law. ... [W]e conclude Riverside's prohibition of medical marijuana dispensaries (MMDs) in Riverside through enacting a zoning ordinance banning MMDs is a lawful method of limiting the use of property by regulating and restricting the

location and establishment of MMDs in the city."

The opinion (*City of Riverside v. Inland Empire Patients' Health and Wellness Center, Inc.*) is believed to be the first to unambiguously state that local jurisdictions possess the legal authority to outlaw such establishments through the passage of restrictive zoning regulations.

The *Riverside* decision follows a separate appellate court opinion in October (*Pack et al. v. Long Beach*) determining that the city of Long Beach could not legally license or authorize medical cannabis dispensaries because marijuana remains illegal under federal law. In that case, the 2nd District Court of Appeals [ruled](#): "The City's ordinance, however, goes beyond decriminalization into authorization. ... [I]t provides *permits* to operate medical marijuana collectives. ... A law which 'authorizes [individuals] to engage in conduct that the federal Act forbids ... stands as an obstacle to the accomplishment and execution of the full purposes and objectives of Congress' and is therefore preempted."

Both decisions are expected to be appealed to the California Supreme Court.

For more information, please contact Keith Stroup, NORML Legal Counsel, at (202) 483-5500.

Justice Department Raids Several Washington State Cannabis Dispensaries

Washington, DC, USA: Federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agents, working in conjunction with local law enforcement officials, [executed a series of raids](#) on Tuesday on over a dozen storefront cannabis dispensaries operating in Washington state. The raids targeted operations in six cities in the state: Seattle, Tacoma, Olympia, Puyallup, Lacey and Rochester.

The statewide sweep comes on the heels of similar Justice Department led efforts cracking

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<continued from previous page> down on the proliferation of medical cannabis providers [in California](#) and [in Montana](#). The Department of Justice had previously coordinated [raids of some 26](#) dispensaries operating in 13 cities in Montana this past March.

Washington state voters decided in 1998 in favor of allowing for the use and cultivation of cannabis for therapeutic purposes. However, [the law](#) did not legalize retail dispensaries.

State law does allow collective medical marijuana gardens of up to 45 plants, or a maximum of 15 plants per patient. Legislation introduced this year that sought to regulate and license the operation of storefront dispensaries was ultimately [vetoed](#) by Democrat Gov. Christine Gregoire.

To date, the federal government has not taken similar prohibitive actions against cannabis dispensaries or state-authorized providers in [Colorado](#), [Maine](#), [New Mexico](#) -- each of which explicitly license such operations under state law.

A spokesperson for the DEA [said](#) that the federal government is not targeting "individuals with serious illness," but rather "those operating commercial storefronts cultivating, selling or distributing marijuana under the guise of state medical marijuana laws. The DEA remains committed to the enforcement of the Controlled Substances Act in all states."

In March 2009, as a Presidential candidate, Barack Obama [pledged](#) to cease utilizing "Justice Department resources to try and circumvent state laws" that allowed for the physician recommended use of cannabis. *For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, or Keith Stroup, NORML Legal Counsel, at (202) 483-5500.*

Cannabinoid Improves Locomotor Function, Reduces Injury In Animal Model Of Spinal Cord Injury

Sao Paulo, Brazil: The administration of the non-psychoactive cannabis plant constituent cannabidiol (CBD) improves mobility in rats

with spinal cord injuries, according to preclinical [data](#) published in the journal *Neurotoxicity Research*.

Investigators at the University of Sao Paulo in Brazil assessed the impact of [CBD](#) on motor function in rats with cryogenically induced spinal cord injury. The animals received injections of a placebo or CBD immediately before, three hours after and daily for six days after surgery.

Researchers reported that cannabidiol-treated rats exhibited higher locomotor skills at the end of one week.

"Cannabidiol improved locomotor functional recovery and reduced injury extent, suggesting that it could be useful in the treatment of spinal cord lesions," investigators concluded.

Previous studies of CBD have documented the cannabinoid to possess [a variety of therapeutic abilities](#), including anti-inflammatory, anti-diabetic, anti-epileptic, anti-cancer, and bone-stimulating properties.

*For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: paul@norml.org. Full text of the study, "Cannabidiol-treated rats exhibited higher motor score after cryogenic spinal cord injury," appears in *Neurotoxicity Research*.*

Study: Vaporized Cannabis Augments The Analgesic Effects Of Opiates In Human Subjects

San Francisco, CA, USA: Cannabis administration significantly augments the analgesic effects of opiates in patients with chronic pain, according to clinical trial [data](#) published online in the journal *Clinical Pharmacology & Therapeutics*.

Investigators at the University of California, San Francisco assessed the use of [vaporized](#) cannabis over a five-day period in 21 chronic pain subjects who were on a regimen of twice-daily doses morphine or oxycodone.

Participants in the trial inhaled cannabis vapor on the evening of day 1 of the study, three

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Researchers determined that subjects' pain "was significantly decreased after the addition of vaporized cannabis" and surmised that cannabis-specific interventions "may allow for opioid treatment at lower doses with fewer [patient] side effects."

They concluded: "The participants experienced less pain after 5 days of inhaling vaporized cannabis; when the morphine and oxycodone groups were combined, this reduction in pain was significant. This is the first human study to demonstrate that inhaled cannabis safely augments the analgesic effects of opioids. ... These results suggest that further controlled studies of the synergistic interaction between cannabinoids and opioids are warranted."

*For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: paul@norml.org. Full text of the study, "Cannabinoid-Opioid interaction in chronic pain," appears in *Clinical Pharmacology & Therapeutics*.*

Study: Alcohol Is "More Than Twice As Harmful As Cannabis"

London, United Kingdom: Alcohol consumption causes far greater harms to the individual user and to society than does the use of cannabis, according to a [review](#) published online in the *Journal of Psychopharmacology*, the journal of the British Association of Psychopharmacology.

Investigators at the Imperial College of London assessed "the relative physical, psychological, and social harms of cannabis and alcohol." Authors reported that cannabis inhalation, particularly long-term, contributes to some potential adverse health effects -- including harms to the lungs, circulatory system, as well as the exacerbation of certain mental health risks. By contrast, authors described alcohol as "a toxic substance" that is responsible for an estimated five percent "of the total global

disease burden."

Researchers determined, "A direct comparison of alcohol and cannabis showed that alcohol was considered to be more than twice as harmful as cannabis to [individual] users, and five times more harmful as cannabis to others (society). ... As there are few areas of harm that each drug can produce where cannabis scores more [dangerous to health] than alcohol, we suggest that even if there were no legal impediment to cannabis use, it would be unlikely to be more harmful than alcohol."

They concluded, "The findings underline the need for a coherent, evidence-based drugs policy that enables individuals to make informed decisions about the consequences of their drug use."

*For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: paul@norml.org. Full text of the study, "Popular intoxicants: what lessons can be learned from the last 40 years of alcohol and cannabis regulation," will appear in the *Journal of Psychopharmacology*.*

Folks Gather For NORMLs 29th Annual Key West Legal Seminar

This year's seminar took place Thursday, December 1, through Saturday, December 3, 2011 at the [Pier House Resort](#) and Caribbean Spa in Key West, Florida. Join NORML's staff and many of the nation's top criminal defense attorneys in one of America's most 'pot-friendly' cities.

[Presentations](#) at this year's seminar included: 'Intellectual Property Rights in the Medical Marijuana Field,' 'Defending Forfeiture Actions, Both Civil and Criminal,' 'Using the Latest and Best Science to Beat a DUI Marijuana Prosecution,' 'The Latest Tips for Using the Internet for Legal Research,' 'Prosecutorial Ethics: What Prosecutors Can and Cannot Do, and How a Defendant Can Use That to His Advantage,' and 'Raising a Medical Necessity Defense in Non-Medical Use States.'

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[Speakers](#) at this year's conference included: **Paul Armentano**, NORML's Deputy Director and the co-author of the book [Marijuana Is Safer: So Why Are We Driving People to Drink?](#) (Chelsea Green, 2009); **Gerald Goldstein**, past president of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (NACDL) and legal counsel for the late-Hunter S. Thompson; **John Wesley Hall**, past president of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers; **Norm Kent**, author of *The Pot Warrior's Manifesto* and a member of NORML's Board of Directors; **Jeralyn Merritt**, founder of [TalkLeft.com](#) and a frequent television legal analyst for Fox News and MSNBC; **David Michael**, co-counsel for Angel Raich and Diane Monson before the United States Supreme Court in [Raich v. Gonzales](#); **Kyndra Miller**, west coast coordinator of the [NORML Women's Alliance](#) and President and CEO of CannaBusiness Law, Inc.; and NORML Executive Director **Allen St. Pierre**.

Social events at this year's seminar included an opening night reception, an afternoon sailboat cruise, and a NORML benefit dinner at [Camille's Restaurant](#). *Conference agenda and registration information for the 29th annual NORML Key West Legal Seminar is available online at: <http://norml.org/about/norml-key-west-legal-seminar>. The Key West Legal Seminar is fully accredited in every state that requires continuing legal education (CLE) for attorneys.*

As a result, in April, Gov. Gregoire vetoed sections of a bill that would have permitted dispensaries in Washington because of federal threats, and in September, Gov. Chafee suspended implementation of Rhode Island's dispensary licensing law.

"It is time to show compassion and common sense," said Gov. Gregoire. "The people getting hurt in all of this are patients."



Gov. Chafee

Gov. Chafee called today's filing a "bi-coastal, bipartisan effort." The two say they have briefed other governors on their strategy and urged them to join the petition. Connecticut Governor Dan Molloy has indicated he will add his name, and they seem confident more will come on board. Sixteen states and the District of Columbia currently have medical cannabis laws.

"Many medical marijuana patients are too sick to grow their own," noted Gov. Gregoire. "There is still not clear and safe access."

In the rescheduling petition, the governors cite nearly 700 peer-reviewed research studies and reports on medical cannabis, and ask for public hearings "so that the government can hear from doctors and scientists."

"We're relieved to see these two governors standing up for the doctors and patients in their states," said ASA Executive Director Steph Sherer. "State laws and medical science deserve more respect than they are getting from this Administration."

Federal prosecutors have sent threatening letters to state and local officials throughout the nation. Many officials, such as those in Maine and many cities in California, have forged ahead despite the intimidation tactics.

"Elected officials everywhere have a duty to uphold their laws on medical cannabis," said Sherer. "And compassion demands that we protect the most seriously ill and injured among us."

This latest petition follows the DEA's denial of another petition in July after a delay of nearly a decade, which ended only when ASA sued the government for unreasonable delay. Americans for Safe Access, in collaboration with the Coalition for Rescheduling Cannabis (CRC), has appealed the federal government's denial; the case is pending in the D.C. Circuit.

Bi-coastal, Bipartisan Governors Petition to Reclassify Cannabis for Medical Use

The governors of two medical cannabis states have jointly asked the federal government to reclassify cannabis so it may be legally distributed like other medicines. Governors Christine Gregoire (D) of Washington and Lincoln Chafee (I) of Rhode Island held a press conference November 30 to publicize their bipartisan petition to the Drug Enforcement Administration, which they decided to send after each received threatening letters from federal prosecutors. Govs. Gregoire and Chafee were warned that their states' employees would be at risk for criminal prosecution if they were in any way involved with licensing or regulating the distribution of medical cannabis to qualified patients.



Gov. Gregoire

