

# CANNABINOID CHRONICLES



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Issue #2  
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## Medical Cannabis News and Information

### Canada - Medical Cannabis in Pharmacies by 2006

Health Canada's (HC) long-delayed plan to sell government-certified cannabis in drugstores appears to be back on track for early next year. The pilot project would stock medicinal cannabis in some pharmacies for use by authorized patients, making Canada the second country after The Netherlands to sell cannabis in pharmacies.

The department is scouting out a handful of urban and rural pharmacies to begin the pilot project by the first quarter of 2006, said spokesman Christopher Williams. "Ideally, we'd like to run it in more than one province," Williams said in an interview. An internal document from HC says it could take up to three years to implement a national pharmacy distribution program. The first pharmacies to stock the product are likely to be in British Columbia, said Robin O'Brien, a Vancouver pharmacist who has been asked by HC to participate as a consultant.

Currently, 943 people are authorized to possess cannabis for medical conditions. Of these, 695 have permission to grow the plant themselves, while Health Canada has authorized 77 growers to produce it for other patients.

Source: Winnipeg Free Press, September 14, 2005.

<http://www.mapinc.org/drugnews/v05/n1476/a07.html>

### Canada - Compassion Clubs Fill Gap

People who have applied to Health Canada to become legal license holders for the purpose of possession and/or production of cannabis for medical reasons are all too aware of the red tape involved in the application process. Throw in the the poor quality of the cannabis provided by Health Canada to legal licensees and it turns out that many folks turn to compassion clubs for their medical cannabis needs.

"Compassion Clubs ( across Canada ) are serving about 10,000 people right now," said Philippe Lucas, director of the Vancouver Island Compassion Society. "And we supply over half of the legal exemptees in Canada. Ironically enough, after going through the onerous application process, you still end up at a Compassion Club to get a good source of (cannabis ) medicine." Only 18% subscribe to government-grown pot, while 74% are allowed to grow their own. That means nearly 700 home-grow operations

in Canada, and more than 100 in BC. "If Health Canada allowed people to grow co-operatively, it would be very likely they would have to monitor far less grow operations," Lucas said.

Vancouver police spokesman Tim Fanning said yesterday that legal pot grow-ops have been busted several times, and while they try to check with Health Canada on the status of a suspected grow op, they aren't always able to get confirmation of a license.

Source: Vancouver 24hours, Fri, 23 Sep 2005.

<http://www.mapinc.org/drugnews/v05/n1516/a02.html>

### US - CHP Allow California Patients to Carry Med Pot

A new policy by the California Highway Patrol (CHP) now allows patients traveling on state highways to have as much as 8 ounces (about 225 grams) of cannabis if they have a certified user identification card or written approval from a physician.

A bulletin released to CHP officers states that an "individual is to be released and the marijuana is not to be seized" if the person qualifies under state law to possess marijuana for medicinal purposes. It also says that officers "shall not conduct traffic enforcement stops for the primary purpose of drug interdiction" involving the authorized use of medical cannabis. Though data on arrests is incomplete, medical cannabis advocates say the high-

way patrol had been responsible for more arrests of patients and caregivers than any other agency in the state.

CHP spokesman Joe Whiteford noted that law enforcement officials were initially confused about how to interpret a US Supreme Court ruling. In June 2005, the court ruled that users of medical cannabis in a dozen states, including California, are not shielded from federal prosecution. However, the justices did not rule on the state's 1996 law that legalized medical cannabis. Patients and their advocates described the policy change as a breakthrough.

Source: Vancouver 24hours, Fri, 23 Sep 2005.

<http://www.mapinc.org/drugnews/v05/n1516/a02.html>

## HAPPY 6TH BIRTHDAY VICS!

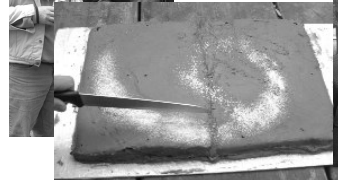
Celebrating the VICS 6th birthday, our annual BBQ was a rollicking success where 50 members, staff and friends scooped hot dogs and burgers, chatted with old and new friends, and munched on those yummy brownies. Huge thanks to Doug for the burgers, Brian for dessert and anyone else who helped



make it happen smoothly. And mega thanks goes to Steve, who pulls it off every time. See you next year!



photos by Ed and Mat



## VICS 1st Annual Winter Goods Drive

*It's getting close to winter and we want your extra blankets, sleeping bags, coats, gloves, etc. to redistribute to needy folks in Victoria. Dropoff items at VICS. Thanks!*

## IACM Bulletin: [www.cannabis-med.org](http://www.cannabis-med.org)

On Sept. 9 and 10, the IACM held its 3rd Conference on Cannabinoids in Medicine. Here are some excerpts:

### (1) Cannabis in multiple sclerosis:

British researchers presented results of a long-term study on a cannabis extract (Sativex) in multiple sclerosis. Patients suffered from at least one of the following symptoms: spasticity, spasms, bladder problems, tremor or pain. 137 patients were included in the long-term study (average duration: 434 days, range: 21-814 days) that followed a six-week acute study with 160 patients. Average maximum daily doses were 37.5 mg THC and CBD in the acute study. 66 patients with spasticity completed 82 weeks of treatment. At entry to the acute study this group had a mean spasticity score of 69.5 on a visual analogue scale, which had reduced to 34.2 on entry into the long-term study and was 31.8 after 82 weeks. In this group average daily doses had reduced marginally from 30 mg THC to 25 mg in the course of the treatment. The study demonstrates that beneficial effects of cannabis on spasticity in multiple sclerosis seem to be maintained over long-term treatment, with no evidence of tolerance.

(Abstract by Robson et al.)

### (2) Cannabis in neuropathy:

Researchers of the University of California presented results of a clinical study of smoked cannabis in 50 patients with HIV-related painful peripheral neuropathy. Participants smoked a cannabis cigarette or a placebo cigarette three times daily for five days. 13 of the 25 patients who had received cannabis cigarettes reported greater than 30 percent reduction in pain, compared with 6 of the 25 patients receiving placebo cigarettes. The pain reduction was greater in the group receiving cannabis (34%) than in the control group (16.7%). Researchers concluded that the magnitude of the response of the neuropathic pain is similar to what is seen with gabapentin, a widely used therapeutic intervention for HIV neuropathy.

(Abstract by Abrams et al.)

### (3) Cannabidiol (CBD) in schizophrenia:

Researchers of the University of Cologne presented results of their study that compared the effects of CBD and amisulpride (an established antipsychotic) in 42 patients with acute schizophrenia. Half of them received 800 mg of oral CBD daily for four weeks. CBD significantly reduced psychopathological symptoms of acute psychosis, when compared to the initial status. There was no statistical difference in treatment effect compared to the control group. Cannabidiol, however, caused significantly less side effects than amisulpride.

(Abstract by Leweke et al., personal communication)

(Abstract book available on the IACM website, [www.cannabis-med.org](http://www.cannabis-med.org))

### US: Medical cannabis and workplace

Courts in California and Oregon are deciding on the question whether employers have the right to fire employees who are allowed to use cannabis for medical purposes if they test positive on cannabis in drug screenings. The Oregon Supreme Court says it will review an appellate court ruling that suggests employers should tolerate workers who use medical cannabis. In contrast to this ruling a Californian court of appeal ruled on September 7 that firing an employee who tests positive for cannabis does not violate the law, even if the employee can show that he uses cannabis for medicinal purposes.

Sources: Associated Press of 15 September 2005, Metropolitan News-Enterprise of 8 September 2005

### Science: Pain

Researchers of the University of Georgia demonstrated that blockade of degradation of endocannabinoids enhanced stress-induced analgesia. They inhibited the enzyme that degrades endocannabinoids, the FAAH (fatty-acid amide hydrolase). This effect was abolished by a CB1 receptor antagonist, which suggests that this form of analgesia is mediated by CB1 receptors.

Source: Suplita RL 2nd et al. Neuropharmacology 2005 Aug 26

### Science: THC for inhalation

Dutch researchers of the University of Groningen developed a THC powder suitable for inhalation. Solutions of THC and inulin in a mixture of tertiary butanol and water were spray freeze dried. They noted that "high cooling rates during the freezing process result in effective stabilisation of THC. The powders can be dispersed into aerosols with a particle size appropriate for inhalation."

Source: van Drooge DJ et al. Eur J Pharm Sci 2005;26(2):231-40

### US: NIDA rejects a study with vaporized cannabis

A scientific protocol to investigate the types of emissions produced by cannabis vaporization has been rejected by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) after an 18 month regulatory delay. In its letter rejecting the protocol, NIDA claimed that the study would "not add to the scientific knowledge base in a significant way."

The protocol, submitted to NIDA in February 2004 on behalf of Chemic Laboratories in Massachusetts, sought to purchase 10 grams of marijuana from the agency so that researchers could conduct a chemical assessment of the cannabis vaporization process. Because NIDA controls the only legal supplies of cannabis in the U.S., its refusal effectively prevents the vaporizer study from proceeding. The vaporization study is aimed at developing a smokeless delivery system for medical marijuana patients.

In 1999 a review of marijuana and health by the National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine moved the government to conduct research into non-smoked, rapid-onset delivery systems for cannabis, because studies have shown vaporization to suppress respiratory toxins by heating cannabis to a temperature where cannabinoid vapors form (typically around 180-190 degrees Celsius), but below the point of combustion where noxious smoke and associated toxins (i.e., carcinogenic hydrocarbons) are produced (near 230 degrees Celsius).

Source: Press release of California NORML of 25 August 2005

### US: JAMA calls for reclassification

An editorial of the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) calls for a reclassification of cannabis to legalize it for medical use. "Sound regulation of medical marijuana requires government oversight based on public health, a rigorous research agenda, a private physician-patient relationship, and respect for patients who seek relief from suffering," the commentary states. "A first step would be to reclassify marijuana as a schedule II drug because, like the schedule II substances cocaine and morphine, it fits well within the statutory definition of having ... 'a currently accepted medical use with severe restrictions.' This would allow for medical prescriptions subject to strict regulation without unduly interfering with federal drug policy."

Source: Lawrence O. Gostin, JD. JAMA 2005;294:842-844

### VITCRI Trial Set for Late October:

Mark your calendar for a tentative trial date that covers three days, starting Monday October 31. Provided that our honourable defender can fit it into his busy schedule, come on out and show the powers that be who has been affected by these police actions. The trial will move downtown to the court house on Broughton St.



Find us online at <http://www.thevics.com>

## Philippe Lucas Running for City Council

Our director is asking for your support in the upcoming BC municipal election on November 19, 2005. Get out and vote!

### Parkinson Drugs May Trigger Pathological Gambling:

A recent study on a rare potential complication of pathological gambling related to drug treatment for Parkinson disease (PD) has shown that the drug pramipexole dihydrochloride is cited as the agonist in 9 of 11 cases, and 10 of 17 cases (68%) in literature. Gambling may resolve when the drug is discontinued.

The study concluded that: "Dopamine agonist therapy was associated with potentially reversible pathological gambling, and pramipexole was the medication predominantly implicated."

The findings are based on 11 patients with PD and pathological gambling who were seen at the Mayo Clinic between 2002 and 2004. All were taking therapeutic doses of a dopamine agonist, the mainstay of treatment for PD.

(Hey, don't let the BC government in on this one given their stance on gambling and "modernization")

Source: Arch Neurol. 2005;62:1377-1381. <http://archneur.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/short/62/9/1377>

### Violence By The Numbers:

Violent actions, those involving great physical force, don't appear to be lacking on this planet. Consider the business of war, where **\$1,035 billion** was spent on militaries worldwide in 2004 alone. 47% of the total was expended by one nation, the US; this translates into \$1,533 for every citizen. Canada was 13th (way to go).

It has been estimated that for roughly \$760 billion, or 7.5% of world military expenditure for the next ten years, we could provide universal access to water and primary education and reduce infant mortality by two-thirds by 2015. Whoa!! Where are our priorities, considering climate change, poverty and environmental degradation? And, consider that nine civilians die for every soldier in war today (numbers were opposite at beginning of 20th century), humans have the most to lose. Give peace a chance, eh?

Source: New Internationalist, August 2005, pgs. 18,19. <http://www.newint.org>

### Gambling and Alcohol:

You've heard that the increase in the number of slot machines in BC is "not an expansion of gambling", as stated by the provincial government. Of course that must also mean that the increased revenue attributable to more machines is not an expansion of tax revenue (??).

Now there is the latest innovation called Racetrax that allows *bar* patrons to bet on simulated horse races. And our Solicitor General Mr. Les had the nerve to call it "modernization". Modernization of what? That age-old technique of removing money from an inebriated person?

The first 500 machines could bring in \$20 million in the first year, with another 1000 at a later date. But why stop there. As one local editorial noted, if revenue is really the issue, then why not get British Columbians to do their income tax in a bar? Now *that* would make for some interesting tax returns, and not necessarily in the government's favour.

If you've got a problem with gambling and need help, call the Problem Gambling Help line at 1-888-795-6111.

Got questions about growing? Our resident guru Mat has made available an e-mail address where you can direct queries -

[askmat@hotmail.com](mailto:askmat@hotmail.com)

### Cannabis Use by Young People in US Not Increased in States That Legalized Medical Cannabis:

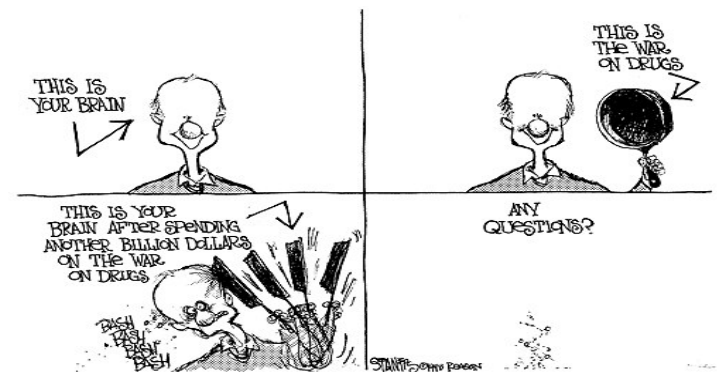
The 10 states that approved the medical use of cannabis over the last decade have experienced sharp declines in cannabis use among teenagers, according to a new study funded and released by the Marijuana Policy Project. The authors Mitch Earleywine, a State University of New York psychology professor, and Karen O'Keefe, a legislative analyst with the Marijuana Policy Project, analyzed federal and state statistics for their report.

Although debate over medical cannabis is often shaded by concerns about increasing drug use among young people, the report does not support this assumption. The study shows widespread reductions in cannabis use have occurred generally at the same rate among all the states, including those allowing medical use. The key findings of the study are: No state that has passed a medical cannabis law has seen an overall increase in teen cannabis use since the law's passage. The decline in teen cannabis use in states with medical cannabis laws slightly exceeds the decline seen nationally.

In the United States, compared with 1996, about 43% fewer 8th graders and 9% fewer 12th graders reported they had used the drug in the past 30 days in 2003. In California that permitted the medical use of cannabis in 1996, past-month use dropped by half among the state's 9th graders and by one-quarter among 11th graders. Other states with medical-cannabis laws also saw varying reductions in youth cannabis use.

The authors of the report noted that in contrast to widely cited prejudices teenagers may increasingly consider cannabis "a treatment for serious illness, that requires cautious and careful handling, not a toy."

Sources: United Press International Sept. 7 2005, Los Angeles Times Sept. 8 2005



### Definitions:

**Draconian, Draconic** *adjs.* (Of laws) rigorous, harsh, cruel. [ from *Drakon*, Athenian legislator circa 620 BC + -IAN, IC ] (The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 7th ed., 1983)

**idiopathy** *n.* (Pathology) disease not preceded or occasioned by another, or by any known cause; hence idiopathic *a.* [ from modern Latin from Greek *idiopathea* (*idios* own) ] (ibid.)

**pathology** *n.* science of bodily diseases; symptoms of a disease; hence pathologist *n.* [ from French *pathologie* or modern Latin *pathologia* (as PATHO-, from Greek *pathos* suffering) ] (ibid.)

**transmute** *v.t.* change the form, nature, or substance of; subject to transmutation; hence or cognate transmutability, transmuter, *ns.*, transmutable, transmutative, *adjs.* [ Middle English, from Latin *TRANS(mutare)* change ] (ibid.)

## Cannabis News:

### Canada- Lynn Wood Can Go Home To Care for Baby

Lynn Wood, owner of the now-closed Cannabis Cafe in St. John, NB, has won an appeal that will allow her to spend at least the next four months at home under house arrest while she and husband Jim care for their newborn baby.

The appeal court judges gave Wood a four-month extension on her bail, a relief for the new mother who is breastfeeding a newborn, as well as caring for three other children, all under the age of six. Her extension lasts until Jan. 10, 2006, when she will be back before an Appeal Court to argue against her conviction and sentence.

Wood, a marijuana activist, was convicted in June of trafficking in cannabis despite her claim that the Cannabis Cafe was a compassion club that sold pot only for medicinal purposes. She was pregnant at the time of conviction, receiving a one year sentence, and served 29 days in jail before being released by a Fredericton judge so she could have her baby at home. Now she is fighting to stay out of jail permanently.

Although the cafe is closed, Wood said she would like to re-open it some day. We wish her all the best.

Source: Edmonton Journal, Sept 14 2005.

<http://www.mapinc.org/drugnews/v05/n1474/a08.html>

### Smith Wins Appeal

Ted Smith of the Cannabis Buyers Club in Victoria, convicted in June of trafficking in cannabis resin and facing a nine-month conditional discharge, has won an appeal.

On Sept. 22, Smith received a letter from the federal Department

of Justice saying it had reviewed his appeal and decided he should be granted a new trial. The Crown, however, has determined it will not proceed and will ask the Court of Appeal to enter an acquittal.

But he also said the decision of the Crown not to proceed with the appeal is almost disappointing. It means he will not be able to pursue his Constitutional challenge of the law.

"That law is still on the books and I won't be happy until it's gone," said Smith.

Smith, however, has his own issues to deal with – he is appealing a personal trafficking charge from Nov. 2000 that saw him fined \$500 for passing out joints, and he is scheduled to reappear on another trafficking charge, from passing out cookies in Nov. 2000.

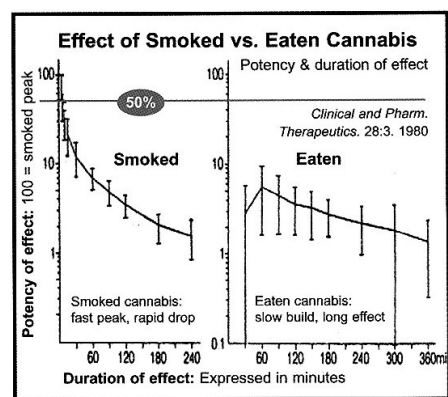
Source: Victoria Times-Colonist, Sept 24 2005.

<http://www.mapinc.org/drugnews/v05/n1527/a04.html>

## Smoked Vs. Eaten Cannabis:

Ingestion, versus inhalation, is becoming an increasingly popular method of cannabis delivery. The major benefit is reduced risk to our pulmonary system, but it also allows for a more evenly distributed medicinal effect.

However, the effects of edible cannabis may be **more** psychoactive than smoking, and can cause extreme muscle relaxation. When eating, start with a small bite, wait for **at least** one hour, and increase the dosage if necessary.



The VICS now has over 500 members (yahoo!).  
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Victoria, BC V8V 2Z8

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#### DrugSense

<http://www.drugsense.org>

#### Canadians for Safe Access

<http://www.safeaccess.ca>

#### Canadian Cannabis Coalition

[www.cannabiscoalition.ca](http://www.cannabiscoalition.ca)

#### Canada Medical Marijuana

[www.medicalmarijuana.ca](http://www.medicalmarijuana.ca)

#### Media Awareness Project

<http://www.mapinc.org>

#### Action Committee of People with Disabilities

383-4105

#### Health Canada

[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/marijuana/index\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/marijuana/index_e.html)

1-866-337-7705

#### Norml Canada

<http://www.normlcanada.org>

#### Cannabis Health

<http://www.cannabishealth.com>

#### Cannabis Research Institute

<http://www.cannabisresearchinstituteinc.com>

**"War is only a cowardly escape from the problems of peace."**

-- Thomas Mann, winner of the 1929 Nobel Prize for Literature