



## US Government: Nearly Four In Ten Admitted To "Treatment" For Marijuana Haven't Used Pot

**Rockville, MD, USA:** Nearly four in ten individuals admitted to substance abuse treatment programs for cannabis have not used the drug in the month prior to their admission, according to data provided by the US Department of Health and Human Services.

According to federal figures, over 37 percent of the estimated 288,000 thousand people who entered drug treatment for pot in 2007 had not reported using it in the 30 days previous to their admission. Another 16 percent of those admitted said that they'd used marijuana three times or fewer in the month prior to their admission.

Commenting on the statistics, NORML Deputy Director Paul Armentano said: "These statistics make it clear that it is not marijuana use *per se* that is

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### Marijuana's Impact On Adolescent Brain "Subtle" Compared To That Of Alcohol

**San Diego, CA, USA:** Chronic marijuana use by adolescents may subtly impair certain neurocognitive skills, but this impairment is far less severe than the adverse effects associated with the use of alcohol, according to a review published in the January issue of the scientific journal *Clinical EEG and Neuroscience*.

Investigators at San Diego State University and the University of California at San Diego wrote: "Recent research has indicated that adolescent substance users show abnormalities on measures of brain functioning, which is linked to changes in neurocognition over time. Abnormalities have been seen in brain structure volume, white

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### Decreasing Marijuana Penalties Does Not Increase Pot Use, Study Says

**Seattle, WA, USA:** The enforcement of criminal penalties against marijuana possession is not associated with a reduction in cannabis use, availability, or potency, according to a new report by the University of Washington and commissioned by the American Civil Liberties Union of Washington.

"Increasing marijuana arrests does not achieve the stated goals of marijuana prohibition," the study found. "Despite recent increases in marijuana arrests, the price of marijuana has dropped; its average potency has increased; it has become more readily available; and marijuana use rates have often increased during the decade of increasing arrests."

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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](http://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 TREATMENT FOR POT, page 1 > driving these treatment admission rates; it is marijuana *prohibition* that is primarily responsible. These people for the most part are not 'addicts' in any true sense of the word. Rather, they are ordinary Americans who have experienced the misfortune of being busted for marijuana who are forced to choose between rehab or jail."

According to state and national statistics, between 60 percent and 70 percent of individuals enrolled in substance abuse 'treatment' for cannabis are referred there by the criminal justice system.

By contrast, fewer than 15 percent of marijuana treatment admissions are voluntary.

*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, "Highlights of the 2007 Treatment Episode Data Sets," is available online at: <http://oas.samhsa.gov/TEDS2k7highlights/TOC.cfm>.*

<continued from MARIJUANA'S IMPACT ON ADOLESCENT BRAIN, page 1 > matter quality, and activation to cognitive tasks, even in youth with as little as one to two years of heavy drinking and consumption levels of 20 drinks per month, especially if [more than] four or five drinks are consumed on a single occasion. Heavy marijuana users show some subtle anomalies too, but generally not the same degree of divergence from demographically similar non-using adolescents."

By contrast, studies have demonstrated that marijuana use by adults, even chronic use, is seldom associated with any long-term residual impact in cognitive skills.

Commenting on the UCSD/UCSD study, NORML Deputy Director Paul Armentano said: "This review affirms once again that cannabis, though not harmless, poses far less risk to the consumer than does alcohol. Given this

premise, it is counterintuitive that our state and federal laws embrace the use of booze while stigmatizing and criminally prohibiting the use of marijuana by adults."

*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, "The influence of substance abuse on adolescent brain development," appears in the journal Clinical EEG and Neuroscience.*

<continued from DECREASING MARIJUANA PENALTIES, page 1 > The authors reported that marijuana arrests comprise nearly 50 percent of all of the drug-related arrests in the United States since 1992. Of those arrested, African Americans are over-represented compared to the marijuana-using population.

"[T]he enforcement of marijuana laws entails many social costs. ...These include the use of controversial policing tactics, the erosion of civil liberties, court over-crowding, the diversion of treatment dollars (when recreational marijuana smokers are required to participate in mandatory drug treatment programs), racial inequity in the application of the law, [and] ... a loss of faith in the judicial system" among those charged with pot-related offenses.

By contrast, authors reported that eliminating criminal penalties for minor marijuana possession offenses does not lead to an increase in cannabis use or other drug-related problems.

"There is no evidence that the decriminalization of marijuana by certain states or the deprioritization of marijuana enforcement in ... municipalities caused an increase in marijuana use or related problems," the study concluded. "This conclusion is consistent with the findings of numerous studies indicating that the increasing enforcement of marijuana laws has little impact on marijuana use rates and that the

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A Washington state proposal, Senate Bill 5615, which seeks decrease marijuana possession penalties from a criminal misdemeanor to a civil infraction, is now before the Senate Rules Committee.

For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500. Full text of the report, "The Consequences and Costs of Marijuana Prohibition" is available online at: <http://www.aclu-wa.org/>.

## U.S. Attorney General Reaffirms Administration's New Pot Policy Stance

**Washington, DC, USA:** United States Attorney General Eric Holder reaffirmed yesterday that he will not authorize federal justice resources to target or prosecute medical cannabis users or providers that are compliant with state law.

Holder's statements clarify remarks he made last month when he said that the Justice Department would uphold President Obama's campaign pledge not to use federal resources to circumvent state medical marijuana laws.

"The Obama administration's position is a dramatic shift in US drug policy, and is a major victory for the 72 million Americans who reside in states where the use of medical cannabis is legal," NORML Executive Director Allen St. Pierre said. "This stance is a marked departure from those of the Bush and Clinton administrations -- both of which consistently used the power of the federal government to try and undermine state medical marijuana laws and prosecute those who followed state law. Further, it also lends support to the ongoing efforts in several states, such as Minnesota, New Jersey, and Rhode Island, each of which are currently debating legislative proposals to make the production and

distribution of medical cannabis legal under state law." For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500.

## Institute Of Medicine Report On Medical Marijuana Celebrates 10-Year Anniversary

**Obama Administration "should heed the advice" of the IOM, and "remove federal legal restrictions so that states can regulate marijuana like other accepted prescription medicines," NORML says**

**Washington, DC, USA:** Next Tuesday marks the ten-year-anniversary of the publication of a National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Medicine report that recommended Congress allow for the clinical investigation and use of medical marijuana.

Investigators from the nonpartisan Institute of Medicine (IOM) released their findings, "Marijuana and Medicine: Assessing the Science Base," on March 17, 1999. The White House Office of National Drug Control commissioned the 267-page report shortly after voters in California passed the Compassionate Use Act of 1996, which legalized the medical use of cannabis under state law.

The IOM report affirmed that marijuana and its constituents possessed numerous therapeutic properties, including the ability to control pain, nausea, and anxiety, and to stimulate appetite.

"[T]here are patients with debilitating symptoms for whom smoked marijuana might provide relief," the study concluded. "Except for the harms associated with smoking, the adverse effects of marijuana use are within the range of effects tolerated for other medications."

Commenting on the ten-year-anniversary of the report, NORML Deputy Director Paul

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<continued from previous page> Armentano said that interest into the therapeutic properties of cannabis is far greater today than it was ten years ago.

According to a search on the PubMed website, there were 427 scientific studies or reviews on cannabis published in 1999. In 2008, there were over 2,100 studies published.

Armentano further noted that the focus of medicinal cannabis research has changed dramatically over the past decade. He said: "Ten years ago, researchers primarily assessed cannabis' ability to temporarily alleviate various disease symptoms. By contrast, scientists today are exploring the role of cannabis to treat actual disease, including the spread of cancer and the progression of multiple sclerosis and Alzheimer's disease."

Armentano also said that scientists have now discovered alternative ways to safely, effectively, and rapidly deliver pot's therapeutic properties to patients via the use of vaporizers – devices that heats the active ingredients in marijuana to a temperature where cannabis vapors form, but below the point of combustion. In 2007, investigators at San Francisco General Hospital assessed vaporization technology. "Vaporization of marijuana does not result in exposure to combustion gases, ... and [was] preferred by most subjects compared to marijuana cigarettes. ... The [vaporizer] device is an effective and apparently safe vehicle for THC delivery," researchers concluded.

"Today, the only practical impediments regarding the legal use of medical marijuana are political hurdles," Armentano concluded. "The Obama administration should heed the advice of the Institute of Medicine and initiate clinical trials regarding the medical use of cannabis, and it should remove federal legal restrictions so that states can regulate marijuana like other accepted prescription medicines."

*For more information, please contact*

*Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: paul@norml.org or Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500.*

## **Inhaled Cannabis Aborts Cluster Headaches, Journal Reports "Marijuana use at the onset of his headaches consistently brought complete relief within five minutes of inhalation for each attack"**

**Bronx, NY, USA:** Inhaling cannabis completely relieved the pain associated with cluster headaches, according to a case study published in the journal *Headache*.

Neurologists from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York reported that a 19-year-old patient with a cyclical pattern of cluster headaches responded favorably to smoked cannabis. The patient lacked responsiveness to numerous traditional treatments – including prednisone, sumatriptan (trade name: Imitrex), and oxycodone – but did report, "Marijuana use at the onset of his headaches consistently brought complete relief within five minutes of inhalation for each attack."

Investigators reported that the patient also received relief from the administration of five-milligram doses of synthetic oral THC (dronabinol). They wrote, "[D]ronabinol was substituted for marijuana for acute treatment of his cluster headaches; dronabinol consistently provided dramatic relief within five to fifteen minutes of ingestion."

Researchers concluded, "We present a patient with cluster headache who was refractory to multiple acute and preventive medications, but successfully aborted his attacks with recreational marijuana use. ... The beneficial effect may be related to the high concentration of cannabinoid receptors in the hypothalamus, which has been implicated as a site of dysfunction in neuroimaging studies of patients with cluster headache."

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<continued from previous page> In 2007, investigators at Italy's University of Perugia, Department of Public Health, reported that patients with chronic migraines possessed "significantly lower" levels of the endogenous cannabinoids anandamide and 2-arachidonylglycerol (2-AG) in their platelets compared to age-matched controls.

"These data support the potential involvement of a dysfunctioning of the endocannabinoid and serotonergic systems in the pathology of chronic migraine and medication-overuse headaches," they concluded. *For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: paul@norml.org. Full text of the study, "Cluster attacks responsive to recreational cannabis and dronabinol," appears in Headache.*

## **Cannabis Spray Shows Long-Term Benefits For Multiple Sclerosis**

**Porton Down, United Kingdom:** Long-term administration of Sativex, an oral spray consisting of natural cannabis extracts, reduces spasticity in multiple sclerosis patients, according to clinical trial data reported last week by the biotechnology firm GW Pharmaceuticals.

Thirty-six patients completed the placebo-controlled randomized withdrawal study. Subjects in the study had been using Sativex for a mean of 3.6 years.

Patients who ceased using Sativex during the four-week trial experienced significantly worse spasticity than they had while taking the drug, investigators reported.

There was "no evidence of withdrawal syndrome in those patients who stopped taking Sativex."

A similarly designed study previously reported that long-term use of Sativex consistently reduced MS-associated neuropathic pain. Patients in that study continued to receive adequate pain relief from Sativex over a period

of several years without growing tolerant to the drug or having to increase their daily dose over time.

"Taken together, these studies show that the efficacy of Sativex in the treatment of both neuropathic pain and spasticity due to MS is maintained in long-term use," researchers concluded in a press release.

Ongoing investigations of the use of cannabinoids and multiple sclerosis have indicated that the compounds may slow the progression of the disease. A 2008 review published in the journal *Current Pharmaceutical Design* reported, "Cannabinoids may not only offer symptom control but [they] may also slow the neurodegenerative disease progression that ultimately leads to the accumulation of disability." In 2005, Sativex was approved in Canada for prescription use to ameliorate symptoms of MS. *For more information, please visit: <http://www.gwpharm.com/>.*

## **New Hampshire: House Votes To Authorize Physician-Supervised Use Of Marijuana**

**Manchester, NH, USA:** Members of the House of Representatives voted Wednesday 234 to 138 in favor of House Bill 648, which seeks to authorize the physician supervised use of marijuana.

The vote marked the first time that either chamber of the New Hampshire legislature had voted in favor of the medicinal use of cannabis. In 2007, House members narrowly defeated a similar bill by a vote of 186 to 177. Under the measure, qualified patients would "not be subject to arrest, prosecution, or penalty, or denied any right or privilege ... for the medical use of marijuana."

The bill now goes before the state Senate. If enacted, New Hampshire would become the fourteenth state to allow for the state-authorized use of medical marijuana.

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<continued from previous page> According to a Mason-Dixon research poll, 71 percent of New Hampshire voters support "changing the law in New Hampshire to allow seriously and terminally ill patients to use and grow medical marijuana for personal use if their doctors recommend it."

*For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: paul@norml.org or Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500. Additional information about this bill is available from NHCompassion.org or by visiting NORML's Take Action Center.*

## **Massachusetts: Lawmakers To Consider Measures To "Tax And Regulate The Cannabis Industry"**

**Boston, MA, USA:** House and Senate bills seeking to "tax and regulate the cannabis industry" have been introduced in the Massachusetts legislature.

House Bill 2929 and Senate companion bill S 1801 propose to legally regulate the commercial production and distribution of marijuana for adults over 21 years of age.

The bills would impose licensing requirements and excise taxes on the retail sale of cannabis. Adults who possess or grow marijuana for personal use, or who engage in the nonprofit transfer of cannabis, would not be subject to taxation under the law.

"Decades of whispered grumblings about the wisdom and efficacy of prohibition is rapidly giving way to a serious — really serious public discussion about how to replace it," said former NORML Board Member Richard Evans, who assisted in drafting the legislation. "Those who consider themselves leaders in government and the media have the obligation to either show how prohibition can be made to work, or join in the exploration of alternatives."

Massachusetts is the second state to consider marijuana regulation legislation this year. In

February, California Assemblyman Tom Ammiano (D-San Francisco) introduced Assembly Bill 390: The Marijuana Control, Regulation, and Education Act. That bill is currently before the Assembly Committee on Public Safety.

Additional information and summaries of H 2929 and S 1801 are available online at: <http://www.cantaxreg.com>.

*For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500 or visit: <http://www.masscann.org>.*

## **Study: Over 7 Million Americans Under prison Supervision In 2007**

**Washington, DC, USA:** The U.S. correctional population swelled to a record 7.3 million people in 2007, according to a study released this week by the nonprofit group Pew Center on the States.

In all, one in 31 adults — including a disproportionate number of African Americans — in the United States is incarcerated, on probation, or on parole, the study found.

"Black adults are four times as likely as whites and nearly 2.5 times as likely as Hispanics to be under correctional control. One in 11 black adults — 9.2 percent — was under correctional supervision at year-end 2007," the study determined. "And although the number of female offenders continues to grow, men of all races are under correctional control at a rate five times that of women."

In Georgia, one in 13 adults is under correctional supervision, the highest percentage of any state in the nation. *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, One in 100: Behind bars in America 2008, is available online at: [http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/news\\_room\\_detail.aspx?id=35912](http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/news_room_detail.aspx?id=35912).*



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

## **NORML Now Accepting Registrations For Fourth Annual Aspen Legal Seminar**

**Washington, DC, USA:** NORML is now accepting registrations from criminal defense attorneys and the general public for its fourth annual Aspen Legal Seminar. This year's event will take place **Friday, June 5** and **Saturday, June 6** at the Gant Hotel and Resort in downtown Aspen, Colorado – one of the nation's most marijuana-friendly cities.

Speakers at this year's conference include: Gerald Goldstein, past president of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (NACDL) and legal counsel for the late-Hunter S. Thompson; famed San Francisco attorney Tony Serra; Hal Haddon, prominent Denver litigator, Jeralyn Merritt, television legal analyst for MSNBC and host of the popular website TalkLeft.com; paraphernalia law specialist Robert Vaughn; NORML Executive Director **Allen St. Pierre**; and NORML Deputy Director **Paul Armentano**.

Topics include: the use of cannabis as a religious sacrament, a review of cannabis pharmacokinetics and drug testing, and proper ways to establish a legal medical marijuana dispensary and other cannabis-related businesses.

Social events at this year's conference include an opening night reception and a

**\* NOTE! The Willamette Valley NORML Public meeting \* Happens every 4th Sat. of the month and will be at h'ERB'S Toasted Subs, 1210 Willamette St, Eugene call: 541.517-0957 -or- visit: <http://WillametteValleyNORML.org> Meanwhile, check out -**



***It's One Hell of A Joint!***

Visit - <http://herbstoastedsubs.com/> - and see!

Saturday night benefit party, catered by Chris Lanter, chef at the popular Aspen restaurant *Cache Cache*.

"This is the one NORML legal seminar each year where we welcome both lawyers and non-lawyers, and our experience with this model has been very positive," said NORML founder and Legal Director Keith Stroup. "Please mark your calendar and join us this June."

Conference agenda and registration information for the 2009 Aspen Legal Seminar is now available online at: [http://www.norml.org/index.cfm?Group\\_ID=6823](http://www.norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=6823).