



Marijuana Use Associated With 'Superior' Cognitive Performance In Schizophrenic Patients, Study Says

Toronto, Ontario ON, Canada: Schizophrenic patients with a history of cannabis use demonstrate "superior neurocognitive performance" compared to non-users, according to the findings of a [meta-analysis](#) to be published in the journal *Schizophrenia Research*.

Investigators at the University of Toronto, Institute of Medical Sciences, performed a meta-analysis to determine the magnitude of the effect of cannabis consumption on cognition in subjects with schizophrenia. Eight studies met inclusion criteria, yielding a total sample of 942 subjects. Three hundred and fifty six of these participants were cannabis users with schizophrenia, and 586 were patients with no history of cannabis use. Neuropsychological tests were grouped into seven

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Washington: Lawmakers Pass Measure To License Medical Cannabis Dispensaries

Olympia, WA, USA: House lawmakers have [passed](#) amended legislation, [Senate Bill 5073](#), that seeks to establish a regulatory system for the distribution of cannabis to qualified patients. Senate lawmakers had previously approved a version of the legislation.

The measure must now be re-approved by Senate lawmakers before heading to the Governor's desk. According to media [reports](#), Gov. Chris Gilgore has stated that she has "concerns" about the bill's language.

The measure does not limit [existing](#) legal protections afforded to patients who elect

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NORML's 2011 National Conference Takes Place

Washington, DC, USA: NORML was busy in the month of April. First, accepting last-minute registrations to attend, then hosting its 2011 national [conference](#), which took place - April 21 through April 23 - at the [Grand Hyatt](#) Hotel in Denver, Colorado, one of America's premier 'pot friendly' cities.



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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**

Willamette Valley NORML is your local network in 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 MARIJUANA USE, page 1 > domains: general cognitive ability and intelligence; selective, sustained and divided attention; executive abilities; working memory and learning; retrieval and recognition; receptive and expressive language abilities and visuo-spatial and construction abilities.

Authors determined, "[R]elated statistics of differences in performance ... all suggest superior cognitive functioning in cannabis-using patients as compared to non-using patient."

Researchers stopped short of attributing subjects' cannabis use to the improved outcome, noting that patients with superior cognitive skills may simply be more likely to acquire cannabis than subjects with lesser abilities.

They wrote: "Given that all studies that met inclusion criteria employed a cross-sectional methodological design, poses a challenge and limits the interpretation of our findings. That is, it is difficult to determine whether it is cannabis itself that triggers alterations in neuropsychological functioning or if drug-using patients represent a subset of the schizophrenia population who exhibit better neurocognitive performance."

Authors concluded, "[C]annabis likely has modest ... effects on neurocognitive function in schizophrenia. ... Longitudinal designs studying the effects of cannabis abstinence or acute challenges are needed to parse the effects of cannabis *per se* on cognition in schizophrenia."

For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director: at: paul@norml.org. Full text of the study, "The effects of cannabis use on neurocognition in schizophrenia: A meta-analysis," will appear in Schizophrenia Research.

<continued from WASHINGTON DISPENSARIES, page 1 > to cultivate their own cannabis for medical purposes.

The proposal also seeks to enact [added legal protections](#), avoiding arrest altogether, for patients who voluntarily register with the state.

For more information on SB 5073, please visit the website of the American Civil Liberties Union here: <http://www.aclu-wa.org/legislative-agenda/regulating-medical-marijuana>.

<continued from NORML CONFERENCE, page 1 > There were Panel discussions and plenary speeches aplenty at this year's conference, which celebrated the 40-year-anniversary of NORML's founding.

Agenda [included](#):

- **Pot-n-Politics: 2011-2012 Marijuana Initiatives;**
- **Cannabis Commerce: Coming of Age;**
- **[NORML Women's Alliance: Closing The Cannabis Gender Gap;](#)**
- **Medical Marijuana: More Than Just THC;**
- **Medibles: Cannabis & Cooking;**
- **NORML at 40-Years-Old;**
- **Marijuana and Safety: Real Myths, Real Concerns;**
- **The Feds, Marijuana, and You;**
- **Marijuana Nation: The Statistics of Cannabis and its Consumers**

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<continued from previous page> This year's keynote speaker was United States Congressman [Jared Polis](#), a Democrat from Colorado's second congressional district. In an [interview](#) conducted last week with CBS News, Congressman Polis called for an end to federal interference in marijuana policy and acknowledged that the passage of statewide medical cannabis legislation has "created thousands of jobs" and "several millions of dollars of tax revenue."

On Day 1 of the Conference, NORML hosted a [debate](#) among Denver's leading mayoral candidates. Former television talk-show host and medical cannabis advocate Montel Williams moderated the debate.

[Social events](#) at this year's conference featured performances by legendary recording artist Ziggy Marley, comedian Ngaio Bealum, and Nashville singer/songwriter [Greta Gaines](#).

It's never too early, start planning for next year! NORML invites the public to join hundreds of likeminded marijuana law reformers at the nation's only annual conference dedicated to ending cannabis prohibition.

Online registration, as well as further details regarding conference speakers, agenda, and social events, is available at: <http://www.norml.org/conference>.

Montana: Lawmakers Resurrect, Then Pass Medical Marijuana Repeal Measure

Helena, MT, USA: Members of the Montana Senate on Thursday [resurrected and then passed](#) House Bill 161, which [repeals](#) the state's six-year-old, voter-approved medical marijuana [law](#).

Senate lawmakers voted 29 to 21 in favor of the GOP-backed measure, which had previously [stalled](#) in committee. In February, House representatives had voted, largely along party lines, [63 to 37](#) in favor of the repeal measure.

The bill is now expected to go before Gov. Brian Schweitzer, a Democrat, who has [voiced support](#) for the state's medical cannabis program.

Separate legislation, [Senate Bills 423](#) and 434 – which seek to limit the scope of Montana's existing law – and House Bill 175 – which would allow voters to decide whether or not to repeal the law in 2012 – [remain pending](#).

Montana is one of [fifteen states](#) recognizing the physician-supervised use of cannabis. To date, no legislature has repealed such a law.

For more information, please visit: <http://montananorml.org> or visit NORML's 'Take Action Center' at: <http://www.capwiz.com/norml2/issues/alert/?alertid=39086501>.

Montana: Governor To Decide Measure To Severely Restrict State's Six-Year-Old Medical Marijuana Law

Helena, MT, USA: Lawmakers this week [approved](#) legislation, Senate Bill 423, which seeks to [restrict](#) the number of patients who may qualify to use medical cannabis legally under state's voter-approved [law](#).

The proposal would require the Board of Medical Examiners to review the practices of any physician who recommends

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cannabis to more than 15 patients in a twelve-month period, and it would limit patients' ability to use cannabis for chronic pain conditions. Provisions in the measure also curtail practices regarding the cultivation and distribution of cannabis to qualified patients.



Proponents of the measure say that they intend to reduce the number of existing medical marijuana patients by over 90 percent.

Senate Bill 423 now goes before Gov. Brian Schweitzer, who in April vetoed legislation that sought to repeal the state's six-year-old medical marijuana law.

Governor Schweitzer has the legal option to veto, approve, or amend the legislation.

For more information, please visit <http://www.montananorml.org> or visit NORML's 'Take Action Center' here: <http://www.capwiz.com/norml2/issues/alert/?alertid=39086501>.

Arizona, District of Columbia Finalize Medical Marijuana Rules

Washington, DC, USA: Regulations have been finalized to allow for the sanctioned-use and dispensing of medical cannabis in the state of Arizona and in the District of Columbia.

In Arizona, representatives from the Department of Health Services have approved rules governing the state's soon-to-be-implemented Arizona Medical Marijuana Program. Voters directed the state to approve regulations regarding the

use and distribution of medicinal cannabis this past November when they decided in favor of Proposition 203. Program rules, physician certification forms, and answers to frequently asked questions are now available online from the Arizona Department of Health Services.

Arizona patients may begin qualifying for the program this week, and dispensary applications will be accepted beginning on June 1. All patients initially approved by the state will have the option to cultivate their own marijuana. However, patients who reside within 25 miles of a state-licensed dispensary will lose this option once such facilities are up and running later this fall.

In the District of Columbia, city leaders have signed off on long-awaited rules regulating patients' use and access to cannabis. Those rules are expected to take effect April 15. The newly finalized regulations will permit D.C. officials to allow as many as ten cultivation centers and five dispensaries in the District. Permit applications are anticipated to be available by April 17.

The forthcoming rules implement facets of I-59, the Legalization of Marijuana for Medical Treatment Initiative, a 1998 municipal ballot measure which garnered 69 percent of the vote yet was never implemented. Under the new regulations, qualifying D.C. patients will be able to obtain medical cannabis at licensed dispensaries, but the personal cultivation of marijuana at home will not be permitted.

Washington DC's forthcoming program is limited to residents of the District of Columbia and is not reflective of any

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[Fifteen states](#) and the District of Columbia have authorized the physician-supervised use of cannabis since 1996.

For more information, please visit: http://norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=339 1.

Cannabis Use Before Age 14 Associated With Earlier Psychotic Onset

Bern, Switzerland: The use of cannabis prior to age 14 is associated with an earlier age at onset of first-episode psychosis, according to trial [data](#) published online in the journal *Schizophrenia Research*.

Investigators at the University Hospital of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry assessed the differences in the age at onset of psychosis among 625 patients with and without a history of cannabis use.

Researchers reported, "Only cannabis use ... starting at age 14 was associated with an earlier age at onset at a small effect size." Overall, the age at onset for patients with first-episode psychosis "was not significantly different" among patients with a history of cannabis use versus non-users.

A 2010 U.S. [study](#) reported in the same journal also failed to independently associate cannabis use with an earlier age of onset of positive symptoms in first-episode schizophrenic patients. The study concluded: "Although cannabis use precedes the onset of illness in most patients, there was no significant association between onset of illness and (cannabis use) that was not accounted for by demographic and clinical variables. ...

Previous studies implicating cannabis use disorders in schizophrenia may need to more comprehensively assess the relationship between cannabis use disorders and schizophrenia."

For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: paul@norml.org. Full text of the study, "Cannabis use disorder and age of onset: A study in first-episode patients," appears online in the journal *Schizophrenia Research*.

Three Out Of Four Americans Support Legalizing Medical Marijuana In Their State

New York, NY, USA:

Some three out of four (74 percent) Americans believe that marijuana should be legalized as a 'medical treatment' option in their state, according to an online

Harris Interactive [poll](#) of 3,171 adults. By contrast, fewer than half of respondents (42 percent) say that they support 'the legalization of marijuana for ... recreational use.'

Support for marijuana law reform varies regionally the poll found. Pollsters reported that adults in the East are most supportive of legalizing marijuana for both medical use (80 percent) and for recreational purposes (50 percent). The West is the next most supportive region of the country - with 76 percent of respondents supporting legalizing medical marijuana and 50 percent endorsing its personal use.

In the Midwest, 74 percent of respondents supported legalizing medical cannabis,

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<continued from previous page> but less than two in five (39 percent) endorsed legalizing its recreational use. Southerners were least supportive of marijuana law reform, with 69 percent of respondents endorsing medical marijuana legalization and only 34 percent supporting the plant's broader legalization.

Respondents between the ages of 47 and 65 were most likely (80 percent) to support legalizing cannabis for therapeutic purposes, while respondents age 18 to 34 were most likely (49 percent) to back full legalization.

Results of a [Pew Research poll](#) released earlier this month found that Americans' support for legalizing the adult use of marijuana has risen from 16 percent approval in 1990 to 45 percent today.

Complete details and methodology of the Harris Interactive poll is available online at: <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/NewsRoom/HarrisPolls/tabid/447/ctl/ReadCustom%20Default/mid/1508/ArticleId/742/Default.aspx>.

<continued from **NORML's Sixth Annual Aspen Legal Seminar,** next page> **list of topics, continued:**

Jury Nullification;

Cannabis and Family Courts: A Survival Guide;

Sentencing Mitigation in a Drug Case;

Ethical Considerations of a Joint Defense Agreement

Speakers at this year's event include NORML Deputy Director Paul Armentano; Leland Berger, Chair, NORML Amicus Committee; 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, Fourth Amendment expert and Immediate Past President of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers; Jeralyn Merritt, founder of TalkLeft.com and frequent television legal analyst for Fox News and MSNBC; Marjorie Russell, chair of the Litigation Skills Department at the Thomas Cooley Law School in Michigan, and NORML Executive Director Allen St. Pierre.

Social events at this year's conference include an opening night reception, a benefit dinner catered by Aspen chef Chris Lanter, and an afternoon cookout at the fabled Owl Farm, the legendary Woody Creek home of the late, best-selling author and NORML Advisory Board member Hunter S. Thompson.

"NORML is proud to make this once-a-year legal seminar open to lawyers and the public," said NORML founder and Legal Director Keith Stroup. "Don't miss this rare opportunity to join NORML's staff and some of the nation's top pot lawyers and activists in this unique and intimate setting.

Registration information and this year's conference agenda is online at:
http://norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=6823.



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

Register Now For NORML's Sixth Annual Aspen Legal Seminar Three-Day Event

June 2 - 4

Washington, DC, USA: NORML is accepting registrations from criminal defense attorneys and the general public to attend its sixth annual Aspen Legal Seminar. This year's event takes place from Thursday, June 2 through Saturday, June 4 at The Gant Hotel in downtown Aspen – one of the nation's most cannabis-friendly cities.

Among the list of topics at this year's conference are the following:

Religious Use of Marijuana as a Legal Defense;

DUI Marijuana: The Science and Trial Tactics;

Medical Marijuana and Workers' Rights;

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* **NOTE!** The Willamette Valley NORML Member meeting happens **every 2nd Sat. of the month** and will be at The Voter Power Office. For more info on meeting visit: <http://w-v-norml.org/Members/meeting.html>



The Willamette Valley NORML Public meeting happens (most!) **every 4th Sat. of the month**

(Excepting Holidays - Nov., Dec. - when it takes place 3rd Sat.!) and will also be at The Voter Power Office at **687 River Av, Eugene, Oregon** * For more info on meeting call: **541.517-0957** –or- visit: <http://w-v-norml.org/meeting.html>

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