Advocates Gather for National Conference

Policy experts, doctors, patients, and other medical cannabis stakeholders are gathering in Washington, D.C. April 5-7, 2014 for ASA's second annual Unity Conference, "Navigating Medical Cannabis in the Mainstream."

"With medical marijuana moving more into the mainstream, patients and advocates are coming together to bring about meaningful change," said ASA Executive Director Steph Sherer. "This conference is not just for patients and advocates; it's for all stakeholders in the effort to establish medical cannabis as one of the public health issues of our time."

The opening day of the conference, Saturday, April 5th, will feature panels on the history of botanical medicines in the U.S., the future of regulation and product safety, an assessment of the different state medical marijuana laws and how they're working for patients, and the

Review of Epilepsy and Medical Cannabis Released

The medical research group American Herbal Pharmacopoeia (AHP) last month issued a comprehensive review of the science and history behind using cannabis to treat epilepsy and seizure disorders. "Cannabis in the Treatment of Epilepsy" is part of the AHP's much larger Therapeutic Compendium of cannabis treatments that goes to press later this spring.

Its free pre-publication release into the public domain comes in response to the media attention and discussion of parents seeking out medical cannabis for their children with seizure disorders, including a statement last

PTSD Study Approved, Michigan Adds to Conditions

A long-delayed study on using cannabis to treat Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in veterans was approved by the federal Department of Health and Human Services last month, and health officials in Michigan added the condition to the list of those for which patients may qualify to register with the state’s medical cannabis program.

The University of Arizona study will measure the efficacy of smoked and vaporized cannabis in treating symptoms of PTSD in 50 veterans. The study is to be conducted by Suzanne Sisley, M.D., who will be one of the featured speakers this weekend at Americans for Safe Access' National Unity Conference in Washington, D.C.

The letter of approval from HHS allows the study's backer, the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS), to purchase research cannabis from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). MAPS has been seeking access to research cannabis for over 22 years without success. The PTSD study received FDA approval long ago, but NIDA is the only legal source of research cannabis, and

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“The advocacy work has been a huge, life-altering experience,” Melissa says. “I’m a walking encyclopedia on medical cannabis now.”

Arkansas advocates are focused on fundraising so they can hire signature gatherers to meet the July 7 deadline for submitting signatures. Melissa says they currently need about 55,000 more to make the ballot this fall, and that’s more than the volunteer team can manage. To find out how to help, go to the campaign website for Arkansans for Compassionate Care at www.arcompassion.com.

ACTION ALERT—Support HR 689 and HR 710
Contact your representative today with ASA’s easy online tool and urge support for two federal bills that will end the federal conflict with state medical cannabis programs: HR 689 and HR 710.

The States’ Medical Marijuana Patient Protections Act (HR 689) would move cannabis out of Schedule 1 of the Controlled Substances Act and allow for medical research to be controlled by an agency other than the National Institute of Drug Abuse. The Truth in Trials Act (HR 710) would allow anyone in compliance with state law who faces federal charges to offer evidence of the medical necessity for their use of cannabis.

Send a message now! AmericansForSafeAccess.org/protectpatients.

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they had refused to release any for the veterans. The PTSD study must still receive clearance from the Drug Enforcement Administration.

The difficulty in obtaining access to research cannabis has been true for a number of other FDA-approved studies, leading DEA Administrative Law Judge Mary Ann Bittner in 2011 to rule that an additional cultivation site license should be issued to Prof. Lyle Craker of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. That ruling was ignored, just like the 1988 administrative law ruling from Chief Judge Francis Young that said cannabis should be immediately rescheduled and made available for medical use.

The Veterans Health Administration estimates as much as 20 percent of those who served in Iraq or Afghanistan have PTSD, and more than 7 million Americans suffer from the condition.

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dose-controlled cannabis extract that is also primarily CBD.

Last month also saw legislators in Alabama and Utah pass laws that would ostensibly allow the legal use of CBD extracts, though neither contains provisions for obtaining or making the medicine.

"Releasing this section of the monograph into the public domain at this time provides clinicians, patients, and their caregivers with a single document that comprehensively summarizes the scientific knowledge to date regarding cannabis and epilepsy,” said Dr. Ben Whalley, Director of Research at the School of Pharmacy, University of Reading in the U.K., who co-authored the review.

The AHP’s forthcoming Therapeutic Compendium is part two of its authoritative Cannabis Monograph, which adds cannabis to the herbal pharmacopeia of recognized botanical medicines. The first part of the monograph, Cannabis Inflorescence: Standards of Identity, Analysis, and Quality Control, set standards for quantifying the identity, purity, quality, and botanical properties of cannabis.