



Americans for Safe Access

Monthly Newsletter

Defending Patients' Access to Medical Marijuana

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The New Face of ASA

Americans for Safe Access is adopting new strategies in the fight for patients' rights. ASA started as a grassroots response to the federal government's raids on medical marijuana patient collectives and providers in California four and a half years ago. ASA activists protested at trials and organized patients to speak out about the injustice of prosecuting sick people for using an effective medicine their doctors recommend and their community has said is legal. ASA continues to offer court support, organize emergency responses to federal raids, and

provide direct services to patients. In addition, we now offer trainings and other services to doctors and attorneys. We are working with lawmakers and other officials to craft better public policies to protect patients. And in the process we've gone from being a small group of local patients to a truly national organization with offices and projects across the country.

ASA is becoming the go-to resource for not just patients but also attorneys, medical professionals and policymakers.

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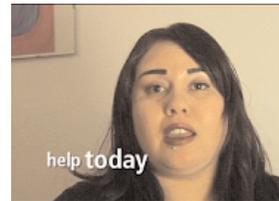
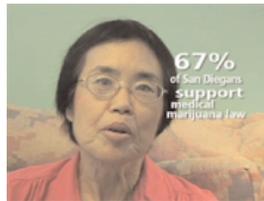
Recent Research Findings

New Communications Strategies Help Broaden Audience

ASA has recently unveiled a new logo and redesigned its communication materials to position the organization as an authoritative resource for physicians, policymakers and politicians. The new look is the result of months of consultation with expert designers and input from staff and the

medical cannabis community. ASA's popular condition-based booklets—which describe the latest scientific research on using cannabis therapeutically for cancer, aging, arthritis, chronic pain, HIV/AIDS, movement disorders, multiple sclerosis and gastrointestinal disorders—have been updated and redesigned. New materials have been created for policymakers, communicating

why patients and researchers should have access to cannabis.



ASA is also using new media strategies. One exciting part of this is the commercial ASA is currently airing on CNN, MSNBC and Fox News in the metro San Diego area, urging action by the San Diego City Council. The commercial depicts a variety of local patients each describing the crisis of access to medical marijuana the city council has created by helping shut all the medical

cannabis dispensaries in the area. ASA is also creating research reports, such as the recent one on medical cannabis dispensary regulations in California, and putting them in the hands of officials who can make a difference for patients.

ASA's website is also undergoing a transformation. Known for its wealth of information, the website already has a fresh look, reflecting the new logo and identity of ASA. But in the next few weeks a whole new architecture will be unveiled, helping visitors to the site—whether they are patients, doctors, reporters, attorneys, or policymakers easily find the information they need.

ASA Opens New Offices, Starts New State and National Campaigns

Washington, D.C.—ASA now has an office in the nation's capitol for federal lobbying efforts targeting Congress and governmental agencies such as the FDA and Health and Human Services. Heading the office there is Caren Woodson, director of Government Affairs. Working with Caren in D.C. as legislative assistant is Barbara Camille. Rounding out the D.C. office is Barbara T. Roberts, Ph.D., a former official in the White House's Office of National Drug Control Policy who helped commission the

1999 Institute of Medicine report that confirmed the efficacy of medical cannabis.

A respected scientist, Dr. Roberts is director of Medical and Scientific Affairs and president of ASA's new Medical and Scientific Advisory Board, which will be working to help policymakers understand the current scientific consensus on the need for access to cannabis for not just treatment but additional research. Dr. Roberts and ASA's advisory board will be working to bring medical

cannabis into the mainstream of healthcare policy discussion.

Washington, Colorado, Rhode Island—ASA is launching new campaigns for safe access in Washington state, Colorado and Rhode Island. In each of these states voters or lawmakers have made legal the medical use of cannabis, but are still working out how to implement those laws. ASA has hired new coordinators in each of these states to work with local

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New Research on Cannabis and MS, Cancer, Epilepsy and Glaucoma

Among the dozens of medical research articles on cannabis and cannabinoids published in the past month are ones related to MS and other autoimmune diseases, breast cancer, epilepsy, and glaucoma.

Scientists in Spain and Israel -- including the doctor who first identified THC, Raphael Mechoulam - this month published new research revealing how the CB2 cannabinoid receptors that modulate the human immune system are generated. This finding is important because the CB2 receptors are not the psychoactive ones, making drugs that target them "very attractive therapeutic agents."

A related study by pharmacy company scientists on the CB2 immune regulation suggests there may be a role for therapeutic cannabinoid drugs in directly treating Multiple Sclerosis and bone density problems.

Meanwhile, Austrian researchers published findings of a placebo-controlled double-blind crossover trial of MS patients that indicate low doses of a synthetic cannabinoid may produce pain control comparable to cannabis.

A team of ten doctors in Italy have just published a study showing the cancer-fighting properties of cannabis, with an emphasis on breast cancer cells. THC has been showing repeatedly to "exhibit antitumor effects on various cancer cell types," but concerns over its psychoactive properties have limited its clinical use. In this study, scientists investigated the antitumor properties of other, less-psychoactive cannabinoids contained in the cannabis plant.

They found that, of the chemicals tested, cannabidiol (CBD) "is the most potent inhibitor of cancer cell growth." The doctors conclude that their "data support the further testing of cannabidiol ... for the potential treatment of cancer."

Polish researchers have produced new evi-

dence that CB1 receptors play a powerful role in controlling seizures such as those associated with epilepsy. Previous studies have shown that cannabinoids "exert potent anticonvulsant effects" and the researchers conclude that in order to understand "the protective role of cannabinoids in the brain during seizures, more advanced neurochemical studies are required.

The effectiveness for glaucoma treatment of THC compared to other cannabinoids was the subject of British research also published this month. Doctors found that a THC spray significantly reduced intra-ocular pressure in the glaucoma patients studied, with few side effects, while CBD did not and, in high doses, actually increased pressure briefly.

NATIONAL ACTION ALERT

Tell the DEA To Stop Attacks on Medical Cannabis Patients and Providers!

Medical cannabis patients and providers are under attack! In just one week the DEA has conducted raids on three dispensaries and several medical cannabis grow facilities across California, restricting safe access for patients across California. Take action now! Tell the DEA to stop their assault on medical cannabis patients and their providers. DEA Administrator Karen Tandy has the power to stop the raids. Join thousands of patients, doctors and supporters and call on Tandy to end these senseless raids and restore safe access to patients. DEA Headquarters: (202) 307-1000.

(Expanding, continued)

patients and community organizations to ensure that patient needs are being met by state policies.

The Colorado Campaign for Safe Access, begun in August 2005 as a joint project between ASA and Sensible Colorado, is an organizing and legal campaign aimed at protecting the rights of medical marijuana patients there. Attorney Brian Vicente and recently hired Campaign Coordinator Sonya Yee have helped Colorado reach a number of important milestones, including opening its first dispensaries and a medical marijuana doctor's clinic, fostering the growth of numerous patient support groups, and establishing positive case law for patients.

In the past few months, ASA has established partnerships with organizations in Washington and Rhode Island to begin state campaigns. In Washington, ASA is working with the ACLU and has recently hired Damon Agnos to coordinate the campaign. In Rhode Island, ASA is partnering with the Rhode Island Patients Advocacy Coalition on a similar campaign to implement the new state medical marijuana law. As we have in California and elsewhere, ASA and partner organizations will be using litigation, education and organizing to craft sound policies that respect patients' rights and mitigate community concerns.

Oakland—At the beginning of August, ASA's national staff in Oakland moved into larger offices to accommodate an expanding staff working on new initiatives. Among the people contributing to this are Delisa

Jones, who is managing office and financial matters, Brian Clay, who is coordinating matters for the ASA legal team, and William Dolphin, who has returned to head ASA's communications department on a fulltime basis after two years at the University of California, Berkeley.

In recent months, Stacie Swayne has come on board to run ASA's telephone outreach program, Juli Montgomery is handling front office matters, and Abby Bair has come from D.C. to run the development program. In addition to these hardworking new staff, Kris Hermes continues as Legal Director with attorney Joe Elford as chief counsel. Rebecca Saltzman continues as field coordinator, while Alex Franco runs the California campaign. Steph Sherer is still the driving force behind ASA, which she founded 4-1/2 years ago.

Los Angeles—ASA's Southern California campaign and large chapter of activist patients is coordinated by ASA Board Member Don Duncan with help from Chris Fusco, who is taking over as county field coordinator from Amanda Brazel.

In LA, Oakland and elsewhere, ASA also relies on the hardwork of our many dispensary liaisons, coordinators and peer educators.

And, of course, none of ASA's success would be possible without the selfless dedication of ASA's more than 30,000 members in chapters and affiliates in more than 40 states who volunteer their time and energy to support ASA's work protecting patients.

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