



Congress Acts to Protect Patients from Sessions until Sept



Federal protections for medical cannabis patients and those who serve them in compliance with state law will continue uninterrupted after all, at least until the end of September. Congress acted on March 23 to pass an appropriations bill that included the Rohrabacher-Blumenauer amendment, which for the fourth year prohibits the Department of Justice from interfering with state medical cannabis programs.

The vote by the House of Representatives on the omnibus spending bill, which funds the government through September 30, 2018, ended months of uncertainty, debate and continuing resolutions. House leadership had blocked the medical cannabis amendment

from coming to a vote, and Attorney General Jeff Sessions has rescinded the Obama Administration's guidance to prosecutors that had discouraged prosecutions.

The amendment is the only thing that prevents federal raids and prosecutions targeting businesses and individuals complying with state medical cannabis laws.



Sessions lobbied to block the amendment. In a May 2017 letter to Congress, he wrote: "I believe it would be unwise for Congress to restrict the discretion of the Department to fund particular prosecutions, particularly in the midst of an historic drug epidemic and poten-

tially long-term uptick in violent crime." Sessions has long been a vocal critic of cannabis reform efforts.

"The inclusion of the CJS Amendment in the House budget shows that Congress knows it must protect medical cannabis patients. We are extremely grateful to Representatives Rohrabacher and Blumenauer and the other members that showed leadership on the issue," said Steph Sherer, Executive Director for Americans for Safe Access. "But this only buys us a few months. We need comprehensive legislation like the CARERS ACT."

Support for the amendment was strong and bipartisan, with 28 Republican and 38 Democrat representatives urging continuation.

Advocates Descend on Annual UN Drug Meeting

In March, medical cannabis advocates, including ASA's Steph Sherer (pictured with Tomas Sedlik ICCI), travelled to Vienna for the annual meeting of the United Nations Committee on Narcotic Drugs (CND). At issue are four "critical review documents" that will be discussed at the 40th Expert Committee on Drug Dependence (ECDD) meeting June 4-8 in Geneva.



Those review documents inform scheduling recommendations the World Health Organization (WHO) makes to the UN commit-

tee. In December 2017, the ECDD released a critical review document on CBD that stated, "in its pure state, cannabidiol does not appear to have abuse potential or cause harm" and recommended to the UN that it remain out of the scheduling scheme all together.

Last month's agenda for the CND delegation includes the "Implementation of the international drug control treaties," where they will discuss "changes in the scope of controlled substances," but they did not vote on CBD's international scheduling status.

Cannabis, including medical cannabis and its resin, is currently classified as Schedule I in the U.S. and IV under the UN Single Convention. This was determined based on a report created by the Health Committee of the League of Nations in 1935.

Maryland Patients to Benefit from ASA's CCC Resources

Maryland patients will be able to access the educational benefits of ASA's Cannabis Care Certification (CCC) program, now that the state has a dispensary that will be offering CCC's Patient Education Program free to all its patients. MedLeaf, a PFC-certified dispensary located in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, is the first dispensary in Maryland to sign up for the CCC Patient Education program.

Every MedLeaf patient will receive an overview of local laws, an information page to hand to their doctor, an 86-page patient's guide, and access to 2.5 hours of educational videos. The educational videos cover topics from the endocannabinoid system and clinical research data to information on choosing, using, and storing medicine. Additional topics include the history of medical cannabis and how to manage in daily life.

ASA's 2018 Unity Conference Just 6 Weeks Away

We are only six weeks away from our 2018 National Medical Cannabis Unity Conference in Washington, DC May 22-24. This year cannabis needs to be part of the national conversation about the opioid crisis, so we are demanding that our lawmakers End Pain, Not Lives.

Panels will include how cannabis can combat the opioid crisis, and a special PFC training course on Federal Law Enforcement Interaction and Raid Preparedness.

ASA is proud to announce the first two sponsors for the conference, Dr. Bronner's and

ForwardGro. Dr. Bronner's is committed to making socially and environmentally responsible products of the best quality, dedicating their profits to help make a better world. ForwardGro, a PFC-certified company, has combined best in class greenhouse growing practices, business management, medical cannabis research, and patient advocacy to become one of Maryland's premier growers of medical cannabis.

Over the past six years, with the help of our Sponsors, ASA has brought over 1,000 patients to DC to improve their advocacy skills.

New Patient Education Course

ASA will host a new course at Greenhouse Ventures' inaugural Cannabis Learn Conference and Expo in Philadelphia. Come talk to ASA staff at their exhibitor table or join their "Patient Education 101 for New Markets" course on Monday, April 30, from 12-12:50pm. ASA readers can save 20% on ticket price using promo code, GHVASA, and half the ticket cost will be donated by GHVASA back to ASA. To get tickets or learn more details, visit CannabisLearn.com.

ASA Activist Profile: Lisa Sublett, Kansas



What led Lisa Sublett to medical cannabis were the health issues she faced after the birth of her last child. Research was part of her career path in corporate marketing, so she set about investigating and soon found a YouTube video of a man with Parkinsonism that showed him trapped in his condition. She could see the suffering in his eyes, but also his intelligence. Then he took cannabis, and the video showed him now walking, talking and driving off.

"This was cannabis!" Lisa says. "I was totally incredulous. I didn't believe it."

But Lisa's research continued, and she came to believe that millions had suffered needlessly because cannabis was not an option. She turned then to finding out who was working on this issue and started to reach out to others.

The group in her state of Kansas that she started out with six years ago turned to advocacy for full adult-use access, but Lisa wanted to achieve access for patients first.

That led her in 2014 to found Bleeding Kansas Inc., a 501(c)3 tax-exempt nonprofit organization. Soon she realized that non-profit status limited her political advocacy, so within two years she had launched Bleeding Kansas Advocates as a 501(c)4, a non-profit that can lobby. She also created the Bleeding Kansas Advocates PAC for political work.

Unlike most states, Kansas allows private citizens to write and submit bills to the legislature. Lisa and Bleeding Kansas Advocates have submitted medical cannabis bills, the Kansas Safe Access Act, in both the Kansas state House

and Senate each of the last three years and gotten stalled in committee. After three years of no hearings in either chamber, last year legislators asked for an interim committee to study the issue over the summer, but that was denied.



Lisa and other advocates were promised a hearing this session but never got it, so last month their 116-page bill was brought as an amendment to another measure by Rep. Cindy Holscher, a champion in the state house. During debate, many lawmakers shared personal stories of support, pushing the amendment to within eight votes of passage. Many who voted no said they supported the bill but wanted a more complete process rather than as an amendment.

The effort got press and political attention, and local public television will be airing a show on medical cannabis in Kansas soon.

For now, Lisa and Bleeding Kansas Advocates are turning attention to the June 1 candidate filing deadline, which will be the start of gathering information for their voter's guide. Then will come voter registration and planning for the next legislative session. Rep. Holscher may be a sponsor of a revised bill, but with bipartisan support and new visibility for the issue, a new bill is destined to be resubmitted.

"You just can't stop," says Lisa.

ASA Education and Training Has Global Reach



Representatives from ASA's Patient Focused Certification (PFC) and Cannabis Care Certification (CCC) programs are engaged in extensive outreach and educational efforts with professional organizations of many types both in the U.S. and abroad.

Last month, PFC presented information from ASA's annual report on state medical cannabis programs, Medical Marijuana Access in the U.S., at the annual meeting of the American Chemical Society Meeting. The meeting included three days of symposiums related to cannabis co-organized with ASA, including one on women in the cannabis industry.

PFC also presented two invited talks to the International Pharmaceutical Academy meeting in Toronto, Canada, one on data from the International Cannabis and Cannabinoids Institute and the other on worker safety and product standards.

This month, the Cannabis Care Certification program will be offering Continuing Medical Education credits to doctors in Edmonton, Canada on April 12, including information medical professionals need about the endocannabinoid system and medical cannabis. Additional CCC and PFC educational events and trainings will be offered this spring. Find out more at safeaccessnow.org/events.

Patient Focused Certification for analytic laboratories has been adopted by the state of Nevada. Individual testing laboratories in several states are participating in the PFC program, which includes audits to ensure compliance with best-practice standards, including three in Pennsylvania, one in Delaware, and two in Colorado. PFC has been working with the international organization A2LA on establishing common standards for laboratories. The cannabis testing laboratory accreditation developed with ASA covers ISO/IEC 17025 standards for everything from flower and concentrates to hemp and hemp-derived products.

Other state-licensed cannabis businesses are also participating in PFC assessments, including two new dispensaries in Maryland, Town Center Wellness and MedLeaf, which have achieved certification and will open in spring.

The PFC program has been getting media attention, with an article in the Evening Express and an upcoming mention in the popular women's magazine Cosmopolitan. PFC's scientific leadership is also being recognized, with Dr. Marcu again being nominated to be president of the International Cannabinoid Research Society. At the upcoming ICRS annual symposium in the Netherlands at the end of June, PFC will be presenting three years of ASA data on state access regulation culled from the annual state access report.

ACTION ALERT: Urge Congress to support CARERS!!

The budget amendment protecting medical cannabis patients almost didn't make it this year, and AG Sessions is determined to roll back the clock on medical cannabis. More than ever, your Senators and Representative need to hear from you about the CARERS Act, a bill that would respect the rights of states to manage medical cannabis programs for their citizens. Take a minute to urge them to sign on as co-sponsors today at www.safeaccessnow.org/carers2017.

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