



## ASA Co-founder Named President of Research Institute

Americans for Safe Access announced this month that ASA co-founder Steph Sherer will serve as President of the International Cannabis and Cannabinoids Institute (ICCI) in Prague, Czech Republic. Sherer will provide vision and fundraising leadership as President of the ASA Board and will continue to work alongside Debbie Churgai, ASA's Interim Director.



ICCI was co-founded by Sherer in 2015 as a joint project of patient organizations, scientific societies, and American investment company Dioscorides Global Holdings. Since then, ICCI

has become a recognized Center of Excellence that works closely with international governments, universities, and research institutes as well as companies in cannabis, hemp, bio-tech, and agricultural sectors to strengthen the medical cannabis industry.

"We are excited that Steph has decided to focus more on ICCI in this next phase of her career," said Dr. Pavel Kubu, the CEO of ICCI. "She has been a strong patient advocate and has a clear vision of the trajectory of the medical cannabis industry. I am dedicated to sup-

port ASA programs scaling to extend patient access globally."

In her 17 years as executive director of ASA, Sherer helped to pass medical cannabis legislation throughout the U.S. and built ASA into the largest nonprofit organization of patients, medical professionals, scientists, and concerned citizens promoting safe and legal access to cannabis for therapeutic use and research.

"Now that societal and governmental barriers to patient access to medical cannabis are breaking down, it is important the industry evolves to provide products that are safe, standardized and targeted and that there is the sci-

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## Veterans Move Closer to Safe Access with New Congressional Strategy



A trio of bipartisan bills that would help ensure safe access for veterans received hearings last month. The House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health heard testimony on the VA Medicinal Cannabis Research Act of 2019 (H.R. 712), the Veterans Cannabis Use for Safe Healing Act (H.R. 2191), and the Veterans Equal Access Act (H.R. 1647). This hearing marks the first non-appropriations sub-committee hearing of the 116th Congress on the issue of veterans' medical cannabis access.

These bills are opposed by VA officials but supported by many Veterans Service Organizations, including the Iraq Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Disabled American Veterans. According to a poll conducted by the American Legion, 92% of all veterans support research into medical cannabis and 83% of veterans support legalizing medical cannabis. IAVA conducted a similar poll showing that 83% of its members also support the legalization of medical cannabis.

The Veterans Equal Access Act would allow Veterans Health Administration (VHA) doctors to help veteran patients fill out medical cannabis enrollment paperwork in states with a medical cannabis program.

The VA Medicinal Cannabis Research Act would direct the Secretary of the VA to carry out clinical trials on the effects of cannabis on health conditions prevalent in the veteran community, including chronic pain and post-traumatic stress disorder.

The Veterans Cannabis Use for Safe Healing Act would prohibit the VA from denying benefits to a veteran who is participating in a state approved medical cannabis program. The VHA system serves over nine million veterans, but VHA doctors are prohibited from recommending cannabis. Veterans disproportionately suffer from conditions such as PTSD and chronic pain that are often treatable with cannabis.

The VA bills are part of a new Congressional strategy on medical cannabis. Instead of tackling on amendments to appropriations bills for the Department of Justice (DOJ), medical cannabis champions in Congress are pursuing legislation that would not have to be renewed each year. As a result, spending bills are emerging from the House without medical cannabis language requested by bipartisan groups.

## Calif. Lobby Day Brings Advocates to Capitol



The month of May kicked off with about 100 advocates gathering in Sacramento for the third annual California state lobby day, sponsored by NORML and Americans for Safe Access. After a continental breakfast, California state Senator Scott Wiener and Nicole Elliott, Senior Advisor on Cannabis to Governor Gavin Newsom, each addressed the group about developing rules and legislation.

Following that, attendees went to the capitol for pre-arranged meetings with lawmakers and their staffers about several pending bills.

ASA and NORML are urging support for SB 34 to Protect Cannabis Compassion Programs in California; AB 286 to Temporarily Lower

Cannabis Taxes; SB 233 to Allow Medical Cannabis Access in Schools; AB 1465 to License Cannabis Consumption Cafés and Lounges; and SB 305 to Allow Qualified Patients Medical Cannabis Access in Healthcare Facilities.

Other bills to provide tax relief to veterans purchasing medical marijuana, provide fee waivers to equity business applicants, and abolish the state narcotics offenders' registry will also be presented.

After lobbying, participants completed feedback forms about their visits and their representatives' positions on bills, which they turned in before attending a VIP reception for lawmakers that evening.

# Activist Profile: Janie and Rylie Maedler, Delaware

Janie Maedler wasn't planning on raising a medical cannabis activist. She just wanted the best possible treatment for her young daughter's rare medical condition. But half a dozen years later, her daughter Rylie, now 13, has been instrumental in the passage of three medical cannabis laws in Delaware, one of which is named for her.



Rylie, who had now also developed a seizure disorder that cannabis extracts helped control, along with her tumors. After months of testifying at hearings and speaking to the media, Delaware passed "Rylie's Law" in 2015, establishing legal access to medical cannabis on the recommendation of a pediatrician.

Janie both supported the change unanimously, and in 2016 the legislature passed the bill. Rylie asked the then-governor, Jack Markell, to sign the bill at her school so the other kids could see why she'd missed so much school going to the capital. He obliged.

"Sometimes people will call me a 'poster child,'" Rylie says. "This bothers me so much because I work my butt off. My mom is an outspoken advocate, and I begged her to let me do this. When I was 11 years old, we made some agreements that I had to take care of my health and grades first, but she and my dad would let me."

Rylie's parents first grew concerned when, as a seven-year-old, she began exhibiting unusual symptoms: first, what looked like a persistent cold, then a blocked nostril, then losing her teeth. After months of uncertainty, a CAT scan found an aggressive tumor attacking one side. Forty-seven tests later, doctors concluded it was a very rare form of tumor, aggressive giant cell granuloma. Surgery and chemotherapy were still the treatment, so the Maedler family began a complementary treatment with cannabis. Janie had done some research on what her young daughter was facing and had decided cannabis could be effective in fighting Rylie's recurrent tumors.

A year later, in 2014, Rylie was speaking at Rotary Clubs and other groups, raising funds and support to start a nonprofit, Rylie's Smile Foundation, for children suffering from rare diseases. Then she and her mother turned their attention to the Delaware legislature, campaigning for a medical cannabis law that would allow access for other children such as

Rylie and her family soon discovered that there is more to safe access than passing a law. In Delaware, cannabis could not be brought on school grounds, so Rylie had to leave school each day to administer her medicine, crossing a bridge to meet her mother. Then, there was the bomb threat.

"I didn't know why she wasn't at our regular spot and the regular time," Janie says. "I had no way to know, and she had no way to tell me, that the school had moved all the students to a secure location."

Rylie didn't get her medicine that day, and had a seizure. Delaware lawmakers were soon opening handwritten letters from Rylie explaining that she needed one more thing from them. She could make it across that bridge in a Nor'easter, but what about other kids with oxygen tanks or mobility problems?

By the time Rylie was done lobbying, the state board of education and the state nurses asso-

ciation both supported the change unanimously, and in 2016 the legislature passed the bill. Rylie asked the then-governor, Jack Markell, to sign the bill at her school so the other kids could see why she'd missed so much school going to the capital. He obliged.

Rylie's Smile Foundation filed a petition to add autism under the new law. At first officials balked at a blanket autism diagnosis, but Janie helped organize mothers of children with autism to come to the hearing and in December 2017, Delaware added "severe debilitating autism."

Last year, Rylie went back to Legislative Hall with a list of things to work on, even as her advocacy goes global. She appeared in Australia and Israel last year, will be in Hong Kong for a technology conference on market disruptors in October, and gave the keynote address at the Cannabis Science Conference.

## ACTION ALERT: Give the FDA Your Perspective on CBD

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will hold a public hearing on May 31 on how to regulate CBD in products for human consumption such as foods, beverages, and dietary supplements. The FDA has also opened a public comment period on the issue. This is your chance to make an impact on important federal policy. Read ASA's suggestions for submitting regulatory comments and submit your own on the regulation of CBD at [www.safeaccessnow.org/fdacomment](http://www.safeaccessnow.org/fdacomment)

"I have so much that I want to do and say. I felt like I could not be heard if I did not do this," Rylie says. "There is a stigma in our own community that the pediatric patients are not heard, yet we are the ones who change so many laws."

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entific infrastructure to support these efforts," said Sherer. "I am excited to expand the community of scientists, investors, and industry leaders committed to serving patients and expanding access to medical cannabis."

Sherer built collaborative relationships with the American Herbal Products Association (AHPA) and the American Herbal Pharmacopoeia (AHP) to create the first medical cannabis industry standards in the areas of distribution, cultivation, analytics, manufacturing, packaging, and labeling. Sherer's international work has focused on medical cannabis policies at the United Nations and within countries as a founding member of the International Medical Cannabis Patients Coalition (IMCPC).

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