



## ASA'S 2018 Vote Medical Marijuana Guide Released



On October 4, Americans for Safe Access launched its 2018 Vote Medical Marijuana voter guide. This annual campaign to educate voters features an interactive online guide that grades members of Congress on their support for medical cannabis legislation, including votes and sponsored bills.

ASA's Voter Guide provides voters with a complete analysis of the current political landscape of medical cannabis in the U.S. Congress, and key state races across the nation. The site also includes a downloadable candidate card so

that voters can make a guide to take with them to the polls.

"ASA created the campaign to help educate supporters and the general public about where their legislators stand on these issues," said ASA Executive Director Steph Sherer. "It is critical for advocates to vote in this year's midterm elections to strengthen medical cannabis laws at both the state and national levels."



Vote Medical Marijuana can help medical cannabis patients, caregivers, and supporters determine if their elected representatives are doing everything possible to protect medical cannabis programs and participants from federal interference. While neither the House nor Senate held a full vote on cannabis legislation in the past year, 2018 has seen increasing support for the issue in Congress, with nearly 50 medical cannabis bills introduced. The CJS Amendment that shields state medical cannabis programs and participants was also renewed for the fourth time.

## CBD Drug Placed in Least Restrictive Category



In late September, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) placed the cannabidiol (CBD) medication Epidiolex in Schedule V, the least restrictive category. Cannabis and its constituents, including CBD, remain illegal under federal law as Schedule I substances.

Epidiolex was approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in June for the treatment of two rare pediatric seizure disorders. This is the first time a cannabis-based medicine has been approved since cannabis was removed from the U.S. Pharmacopeia in 1942 after having been a recognized medicine for 90 years.

"Now that Epidiolex has been approved by the FDA, it has a currently accepted medical use in treatment in the United States," wrote Acting Administrator Uttam Dhillon in the

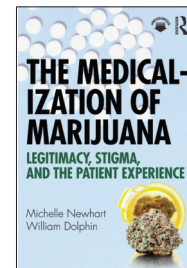
DEA's notice, who also noted that "any non-FDA-approved CBD extract...remains a schedule I controlled substance under the CSA."

The DEA decision was triggered by the FDA's findings on the successful clinical trials of Epidiolex. But leaving all other CBD medicines in Schedule I conflicts with the FDA's recommendation that CBD be completely descheduled and removed from the Controlled Substances Act (CSA). The DEA has cited the United State's treaty obligations as the reason for maintaining the scheduling of CBD and placing Epidiolex in Schedule V.

The FDA recommendation on CBD was conveyed in an internal letter to the DEA in May. The FDA noted that CBD products "do not have a significant potential for abuse and could be removed from the CSA."

Grading criteria for the guide was based on support for bipartisan legislation such as the CARERS Act and the CJS budget amendments of the past three years. For the Senate, CARERS and the STATES Act were ranked highest. In the House, it was the CJS Amendment.

## ASA Author to Present on Patient Stigma at Denver Conference



The effects of stigma and stereotype on how patients access medical cannabis will be the topic of a breakout session at the annual Marijuana for Medical Professionals Conference (MJ for MDs) in Denver, Colorado on Tuesday, October 16 at 12:30pm.

ASA's new Colorado chapter will also have a table at the event.

## ASA Presents at Boston Abilities Expo and MUSC

On September 21-23, ASA Associate Director Debbie Churgai presented a workshop on "How Medical Cannabis Can Help People with Disabilities" at the Boston Abilities Expo. The presentation explained how cannabis can be an option for treating a variety of conditions and how patients can access it where they live. The presentation also covered how new patients can learn more from ASA's Cannabis Care Certification program. Churgai was joined at the booth by Nichole Snow, who was recognized as ASA's Activist of the Year in 2017 for her work with the Massachusetts Patient Advocacy Alliance. Upcoming Abilities Expos are scheduled for Houston, Boston, San Mateo, Toronto and



New York. To volunteer, contact info@safeaccessnow.org.

On September 28, ASA's Director of Government Affairs David Mangone joined researchers, lawyers and South Carolina lawmakers in Charleston at the Medical

University of South Carolina (MUSC) for the inaugural Update on Medical Cannabis. Mangone spoke about the obstacles from the federal government that states face when implementing medical cannabis programs. Other highlights from the conference included updates on current cannabis research, the role of nurses in medical cannabis programs, cancer clinical case observations, and the treatment of PTSD in veterans.

The presentation by Michelle Newhart PhD and ASA's William Dolphin draws on the research findings from their new book, *The Medicalization of Marijuana: Legitimacy, Stigma, and the Patient Experience*. Following the session, they will be doing a book signing.

Dolphin and Newhart will also be discussing what they discovered about the experiences of patients in an online ASA webinar on Wednesday, October 24 at 8:30pm Eastern.

The MJ for MDs conference, which includes many CME credit courses for physicians and other professionals, runs from Oct. 14-16 at the Marriot Hotel Denver Tech Center. See MarijuanaForMedicalProfessionals.com for more information.

# ASA Activist Profile: New LA Chapter

ASA is welcoming a new chapter in the world's largest cannabis market, Los Angeles, California. The two principal organizers, Chris Malcolm and Antonio Frazier, were each working independently on the idea this past year, without knowing what the other was up to. But when they each contacted ASA headquarters about starting a chapter, and staff suggested they work together, it turned out the two were already golfing buddies. They just hadn't been talking about their ideas for getting more involved with patient advocacy.



Both Chris and Antonio are long-time members of the cannabis industry. Antonio is one of the principals at the analytical laboratory CannaSafe, which recently received its PFC certification from ASA.

"Chris has been testing with us for some time, even before compliance was enforced, so we have a great relationship," says Antonio. "We had no idea they were working on this at the same time until recently. We call this industry 'the wild west,' and like any good western, the good guys end up working together."

Chris, who has worked in real estate for 22 years, operates two dispensaries and helped found a local trade organization in 2016 called United Cannabis Business Association (UCBA). Through UCBA, Chris has worked with the City

of Los Angeles on crafting sensible regulations for the past four years and helped draft Measure N, a tax and regulation initiative, in 2017.

Chris first became interested in medical cannabis because of a friend's family medical problems and his own herniated disc. Chris's parents are even on board at this point, though it took them a while to understand why Chris felt compelled to spread the word.

"Why do you have to tell everyone?" Chris recalls them asking, to which he would reply, "We're not part of the problem. We're part of the solution."

That solution includes advocacy. For Antonio, advocacy is built into the business model. Antonio met ASA Executive Director Steph Sherer at the first event he attended after being hired by CannaSafe.

"We want to push cannabis science towards standardization so that it can gain the trust of its patients and regulators," Antonio says. "After spending the last 5 years in DC, I immediately realized how important it would be to build a relationship with ASA. Steph connected me to PFC, and we became PFC certified."

Chris and Antonio have filed their formal chapter papers with ASA and expect to start holding chapter meetings by yearend.

"We're going to have an active chapter," Chris says. We may not always agree, but we're all fighting the same fight."

# PFC has New Director and Updated Website



ASA's Patient Focused Certification team last month welcomed a new director, Heather Despres, who has been working in the cannabis industry for over 10 years. Despres brings with her a goal to make customer service PFC's #1 priority. This starts with an updated website that includes additional business services and training options to better help cannabis businesses succeed.

The updated site now includes:

- New Business Services (application and SOP review/writing/drafting, LOI for aps, consultation)
- Individual Training Courses available for purchase
- List of PFC Certified Companies
- Calendar of Events
- Link to full PFC Course Guide
- Patient and Caregiver Education Course
- CME Courses for Medical Professionals.

Visit [PatientFocusedCertification.org](http://PatientFocusedCertification.org) to see all the services and for more information.

## Free Online Webinars in October

Upcoming ASA webinars cover groundbreaking new research on the patient experience (Oct. 24), and how "method validation" can help standardize all types of cannabis operations (Nov. 7). Both are free to attend online.

Tune in Wednesday, Oct. 24, as Michelle Newhart, PhD and ASA's William Dolphin discuss their new book, *The Medicalization of Marijuana*. Learn what their research reveals about what it means to participate in a state medical cannabis program. Hear how patient experiences with medical cannabis fit with that of other medicines and how that's changing. This webinar will be live Wednesday, Oct. 24 at 8:30pm EST. RSVP and get a code for 20% off the book at [www.safeaccessnow.org/medicalization\\_of\\_marijuana\\_webinar](http://www.safeaccessnow.org/medicalization_of_marijuana_webinar).

On Nov. 7, join PFC Director Heather Despres for "Method Validation – Not Just for Labs!" This webinar will review what method validation is, how it can be achieved, and how it is necessary for many different types of operations. We'll also review how validation fits into a good quality system and discuss strategies for validating various processes. This webinar will be live Nov. 7, at 5:00pm EST. RSVP at [safeaccessnow.org/method\\_validation\\_webinar](http://safeaccessnow.org/method_validation_webinar).

## Save the Date: Unity 2019 March 18-20

Save the dates for ASA's 2019 National Unity Conference. Advocates and experts will gather in Washington D.C. for educational sessions, networking and citizen lobbying from March 18-20. Put the dates in your calendar, and stay tuned for a full agenda and more details.

## ACTION ALERT: Register and Vote Medical Marijuana!

The political change the November 6 elections will bring are an opportunity for patients and advocates to be heard. Dozens of new members of Congress will have a chance to reform federal policies, so make sure you're registered to vote and then choose carefully. Go to [VoteMedicalMarijuana.com](http://VoteMedicalMarijuana.com) to find out where your candidates stand on medical cannabis issues. Share the information with friends and family, and make sure they're registered and voting, too. Ever vote makes a difference, particularly when you Vote Medical Marijuana! Get the resources today at <http://VoteMedicalMarijuana.com>.

## JOIN TODAY!

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