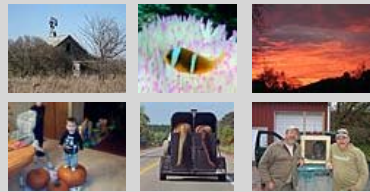




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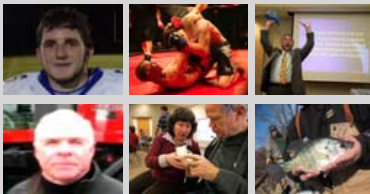
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# Iowa: Medical-marijuana hearings conclude

BY MIKE GLOVER THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DES MOINES -- After holding hearings throughout Iowa about medical uses of marijuana, pharmacy regulators will consider whether to recommend that legislators change the state's law prohibiting the drug's use or possession.

The last of four meetings was held Wednesday in Council Bluffs. Like the others, it primarily drew speakers who believe marijuana should be legal for medical uses. But even backers changing the law say it's unlikely lawmakers will take quick action, regardless of what members of the Board of Pharmacy recommend.

The big issue facing lawmakers when they convene in January will be a budget shortfall of up to \$900 million. To cut costs, legislative leaders have reduced the length of the session by 20 days, leaving less time for other issues.

The issue initially came before the pharmacy board in 2008 when the American Civil Liberties Union of Iowa and others petitioned the board to remove marijuana from the Legislature's Schedule I classification. To be classified as Schedule I, a drug must have a high potential for abuse and no safe medical use within the U.S.

The board rejected the request, then took up the matter again in 2009 at the order of a Polk County judge in response to a petition by the ACLU. The board again rejected the request to reclassify marijuana but agreed to hold hearings, followed by a scientific review and recommendation to the Legislature.

Dr. Deborah LeBeau, a Dubuque obstetrician, said there's almost no doubt about the medical benefits of marijuana.

"Essentially, it's a medicinal plant," LeBeau said. "This plant developed a bad rap in our country in the mid-20th century. It's time we get on board with the 21st century."

Nationally, 14 states allow some use of marijuana for medical purposes.

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51° F / 10° C



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Wind: E 12 MPH

Wind Chill: 47° F

Humidity: 0%

National Weather Service  
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