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Iowa Board Rules On Medical Marijuana

ACLU, Activists Plan To Continue Fight

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DES MOINES, Iowa -- The Iowa Board of Pharmacy declined Monday to reclassify marijuana as a drug that certain patients could use for medical reasons.

The board made it clear it's not about to embrace marijuana as medicine.

A Polk County judge ordered the Iowa Pharmacy Board to at least consider whether marijuana has any acceptable medical uses. Board members answered the review on Monday with a resounding no.

Des Moines resident, Carl Olsen, a long-time activist who seeks to legalize marijuana, in this case at least for medical reasons, asked the Board to consider adding the drug as one alternative for certain medical conditions.

"If a guy's growing marijuana because it's good for his AIDS and it's the only thing that'll save his life, why should he go to prison for that? It just doesn't make sense," said Olsen.

Board members said they don't think it makes sense to reclassify marijuana, in a discussion that lasts just a few minutes. They counter Olsen's argument that at least a dozen other states allow it.

"His argument that 12 other states have allowed medical marijuana use in some format, in and of itself, is not justification to do that in this state," said Deann Wedemeyer-Oleson, Iowa Pharmacy Board member.

"We need science-based evidence that there are acceptable uses and that those uses are within the realm of safety for the public," said Susan Frey, Iowa Pharmacy Board member.

"That helps. Because they come out so block-headed and so anti--I mean, what's the problem? Why can't we allow people to use this?" said Carl Olsen, activist seeking to legalize medical marijuana.

The board plans to respond to a Polk County judge that it does not have enough evidence to reclassify marijuana.

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Olsen said he'd continue his crusade -- along with the ACLU of Iowa -- as the case goes back to a courtroom.

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