



Pharmacy Board's Paternalistic Prescription for Iowa Patients

by Dan Bernath

Apparently, the Iowa Board of Pharmacy's standard of proof for the efficacy and safety of medical marijuana is pretty high. Much higher, than that of, say, the National Academy of Science's Institute of Medicine, which in 1999 concluded, "Nausea, appetite loss, pain, and anxiety are all afflictions of wasting and all can be mitigated by marijuana."

The board was required by a court order to [evaluate the scientific evidence surrounding medical marijuana Monday](#) to determine whether it ought to be reclassified under the state's controlled substances list.

But the board's justification for rejecting the evidence presented said much more about the board's condescending attitude toward medical marijuana and its advocates than it did about the evidence itself.

Seizing on one ~~small~~ point made by advocates – that 13 states had already passed medical marijuana laws – here's what Guthrie County pharmacist DeeAnn Wedemeyer-Oleson had to say:

I liken this a lot to when I was a junior in high school and I pleaded to my dad that the time I should be allowed to stay out at night should be extended to one o'clock in the morning.

I said, I was a junior in high school and all my other friends got to stay out until one o'clock in the morning. And he said, 'well if all of your friends jumped off the bridge, does that mean you should jump off the bridge?'

That's cool. I liken Wedemeyer-Oleson's logic to when I was in kindergarten and would stick my fingers in my ears and sing loudly whenever a grownup would try to tell me something I didn't want to hear.

[update: Carl Olsen, whose group won the court order that led to the pharm board's review, makes an important point in comment #3 that I missed in my original post. The argument that 13 states already accept medical marijuana's safety and efficacy is by no means small. It should have been crucial to the board's decision if they'd applied the Iowa legal standard of whether marijuana has any accepted medical use in the United States. Thanks for clarifying that, Carl.]

Tagged with: [Institute of Medicine](#) and [Iowa](#) and [science](#) by the author

23 comments

[1](#) **Mayday** { 06.02.09 at 3:29 pm }

Good point Mr. Bernath (pretty funny too). It really sucks that this even needs to be argued. How can helping the sick be so intolerable? Because people don't buy ridiculously expensive and potentially harmful (opiate based) drugs? Shame on us... How did we let the government have so much control? Keep fighting mpp.com, lead the way!!

[2](#) **B** { 06.02.09 at 3:44 pm }

My own sister is a Pharmacist. It is indoctrinated in their schooling that marijuana has no medical benefit or value. Pharmacists do not believe in herbal medicine and think that all medicine's should only be made by Pharmacist.

But with all the medical findings coming around, she's finally starting to come around the corner. I think there is a sense of ignorant pride that these Pharmacists try to uphold in thinking that their medical school would never lie to them. THEY DID!!!

I'm sure if they brought up the fact the Federal government has been giving it out since the 70's, these Pharmacists would shut the F up!!!

No Pharmacist in the US would ever promote an herbal remedy. It would be like shooting themselves in the foot knowing there is something out there that grows naturally and is more effective than their holy snake oils.

[3 Carl Olsen](#) { 06.02.09 at 3:53 pm }

Iowa law says anything in Schedule I must have “no accepted medical use in treatment in the United States.” What the Board is trying to do is determine whether marijuana has accepted medical use in Iowa. I did not ask them to decide whether marijuana has accepted medical use in Iowa. That is not what the law says. I will do that after they remove it from Schedule I, because the laws simply says they have to remove it.

[4 DarthNole](#) { 06.02.09 at 4:35 pm }

Carl:

I wanted to say “thank you” for bring this fight to them. I too have found it amazing that they are having a hard time desciphering the English language. The question should never be about whether you agree or disagree with Medical Marijuana. IT is simply a matter of following the law as it is written. If the Iowa Legislature wanted it to read “accepted medical use in Iowa... or in the majority of the US... or by the World Health Organization... or whatever they would have written the law that way. But instead... in order to gain enough support to pass, they settled on the language that say “in the United States”. Well, there are 13 states in the US that have accepted the use for treatment, so it should be removed from Schedule I. PLease make sure they are reminded that the US Government currently distributes Medical Marijuana to US citizens for the treatment of their ailments.

The fact is... if one doctor accepts the use for treatment then they should be able to prescribe it. If the doctor doesn't agree then they don't have to recommend it. The decision should be made by the Doctor and as it stands your state is withholding that right from that doctor.

[5 m](#) { 06.02.09 at 5:06 pm }

Besides the “accepted medical uses” canard, there's something else that was even more egregious. Susan Frey, one of the pharmacists on the board, claimed that using medical cannabis did not conform to any “uses [that] are within the realm of safety for the public.”

There is simply no medically active substance that has the same margin of safety as cannabis. Cannabis has no lethal dose, period. I suppose someone could claim that intoxication could cause someone to do something unsafe, but the reality is that people tend to get immobile when they use a little too much cannabis.

Unlike with alcohol or most of the psychoactive drugs that pharmacists can currently prescribe in Iowa, those who use cannabis are orders of magnitude less likely to get behind the wheel or do something else stupid when using cannabis. This is especially so for those who use it medically.

The Iowa pharmacists board is an example of how even people with advanced degrees can be utterly stupid and nonsensical. Is there a drug to prevent that? Unfortunately, no.

[6 Zeriam](#) { 06.02.09 at 6:25 pm }

What a b1tch!

[7 Ray](#) { 06.02.09 at 7:34 pm }

Well there's more profit in prescribing Marinol...

[8 m](#) { 06.02.09 at 7:57 pm }

Ray,

You got that right. I've been on both sides as a patient. There's no doubt in my mind that the DEA operates as a profit support system for the Marinol cartel. About 6 to 10 times the price and — on a good day — no more than half as effective.

In less than a year, the price of Marinol and dronabinol (generic equivalent) has ranged from ~\$140 to ~\$400 (2.5mg/60ct) for me. There's no rhyme or reason to it, just consumer rip-off.

Ms. Frey and her pharmacist buddies should be paying off those student loans early, so long as they can keep their Marinol racket protected by federal thugs.

[9 RevRavGreen](#) { 06.02.09 at 9:04 pm }

I was there, so said that they don't realize

jumping off a bridge = bad

medical marijuana = good

they wanted science, I was living proof in the room.

KCCI-TV Iowa medical marijuana survey UP-+ 59%

<http://www.kcci.com/index.html>

[10 RevRayGreen](#) { 06.02.09 at 9:04 pm }

so sad

[11 Dr. Fumbles](#) { 06.03.09 at 12:13 am }

I don't know, I hang out with a good crowd for the most part. If all my friends were bridge diving I would have to look into their reasons why.

[12 Rasta](#) { 06.03.09 at 5:01 am }

they are a bunch of BLOOD-KLAATS! stoping the universal flow of life... PEACE

[13 Steve](#) { 06.03.09 at 6:21 am }

I- idiots
O- out
W- wondering
A- around

[14 lo9an](#) { 06.03.09 at 6:24 am }

File your complaint against Susan Frey and the Iowa Board of Pharmacy here: debbie.jorgenson@iowa.gov

[15 Darryl H](#) { 06.03.09 at 8:48 am }

These people from the Iowa Board of Pharmacy must be locked up in a closet because just in the last few months there has been several NEW studies showing the fact that marijuana does have medicinal properties like stopping brain tumors and treating ADD and the list goes on and on! There is only one answer to why they would do what they did and say what they said and it relates right back to the money that they would loose from the sales of there poisons. It is time for a REVOLUTION in this country to take back control of our own bodies and what we put into ourselves, it should be our personal choice what kind of medicine we use be it a pill or be it herbal. IT SHOULD BE OUR CHOICE NOT THE GOVERNMENTS!

[16 dim](#) { 06.03.09 at 9:41 am }

Since all of their arguments can be scientifically proven wrong, wouldn't what they're doing be something like obstructing commerce?

[17 Freedom Lover](#) { 06.03.09 at 2:24 pm }

This little game of Catch-22 is getting old. We've had stem cell limits lifted. Are they telling us that a PLANT cannot be studied??!!

[18 Cliff](#) { 06.03.09 at 4:43 pm }

Pharmacists go to school to learn the evil ways of the synthetic drug dealers. After graduation they become licensed puppets of the drug dealers. Their only purpose then is to suck in billions for the drug dealers. The Creator's cannabis doesn't fit their plan.

[19 DarthNole](#) { 06.03.09 at 11:19 pm }

Carl:

Is there video of the full "Hearing"?

[20 PapaRon420](#) { 06.04.09 at 4:46 am }

I'm just REALLY excited that I'm starting to see the push for the reclassification of Marijuana to ANYTING but Schedule 1 status!!! That's just WRONG for it to be there.

I believe, Schedule 3 or 4 is what we should be shooting for - The reason is, if we only go down to Sched.2 then it does NO good for the Decriminalization OR Medical movement because COCAINE is a Schedule 2 drug. In Schedule 2 status, Doctors would be able to prescribe it-TRUE - But then BIG PHARM would get hold of it and then GOOD LUCK on price control and/or growing your own. Most of all, I hear Gov't Medical MJ is GARBAGE! CRAZY HUH?

Reclassification is my opinion is our #1 priority because I do not want the Federal Government to come along in 3.5 years and say, NO NO NO - NO more of THIS -WE said it's been illegal all along, Schedule 1 STATUS - we've effectively flushed you all out and now we are coming over to GET YOU! (In essence...)
Tell Charlie Lynch that's not possible!

Regardless of what anyone thinks, the Federal law sees it as, all 13 States that have Medical Marijuana are operating outside of Federal Law. Thus ALL the activities are still Federally illegal.

[21 troy](#) { 06.04.09 at 10:50 am }

That comment by her ,makes her look stupid and ignorant,it does not even make a good argument staying out later and jumping off a bridge are two completely different things,Second and that most important thing is they flat refused a COURT ORDER to scientificaly reevaluated medical marijuana,with a idiotic arugment that had nothing to do with the scientific evaluation.Cann't we have them imprisoned for contempt of a court order with that in mind.

[22 troy](#) { 06.04.09 at 10:53 am }

also the federal law for controlled substance act is a complete violation of the 10th amendment of the constitution,that power was not granted to it by the people or the constitution,therefore that reverted solely to the states and the people.The federal government never had the right to make that law in the first place.

[23 PapaRon420](#) { 06.04.09 at 7:31 pm }

Then by your definition Troy, would that render the Scheduling of MJ Void or would it render all drugs scheduling essentially null and void? I wouldn't want that. I believe we'd be sorry, except for the Fine Herb.
Has anyone tried that approach yet? I just wonder if any of this will be finally ironed out.

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