



Medical marijuana remains illegal in Iowa

Charlotte Eby | Posted: Monday, June 1, 2009 9:35 pm

DES MOINES – The Iowa Board of Pharmacy on Monday again rejected the arguments of advocates who want to allow the use of marijuana for medical purposes, saying they failed to present sufficient evidence.

Those advocates had asked the board to recommend that marijuana be removed from what is known as a schedule 1 classification. They argued that marijuana no longer met that classification's criteria of having no accepted use in medical treatments in the United States.

The advocates for medicinal marijuana use argued that the drug is now legally used for medical purposes in 13 states. They took the board to court last year after the board refused to review marijuana's classification.

One of those advocates, Carl Olesen of Des Moines, wasn't surprised by the board's action and expected to bring his fight back into court.

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

In their decision Monday, board members cited a lack of scientific evidence, and said that just because other states are allowing the use of marijuana for medical purposes doesn't mean Iowa should.

Board member DeeAnn Wedemeyer-Oleson compared the decision to her teenage years when she argued to her father she should be able to stay out later because other her friends did.

"He said 'well, if all of your friends jumped off a bridge, does that mean you should jump off the bridge?' So to me, this whole other 12, what is now 13, states allowing medical marijuana use is not at all sufficient to allow the board of pharmacy to make a decision," she said.

The medical marijuana advocates had won one round in court. Polk County District Judge Joel Novak ruled in April that the board must determine whether the evidence those advocates presented was sufficient to support a finding that marijuana has accepted medical use in the United States and is safe to use under medical supervision.

But the board, in its review Monday, ultimately ruled against the advocates of marijuana for medical use.