

## CALIFORNIA DECIDES THAT SMOKING MARIJUANA CAUSES CANCER

### Re: SB 119 and AB 804 - the New Jersey “medical” marijuana bill

To the New Jersey Legislature

A few days ago, the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment declared that marijuana smoke causes cancer (attached). This was after an extensive review of over 30 scientific papers and a hearing. The “medical” marijuana bill permits smoking marijuana for a variety of conditions. The bill does not just apply to terminal conditions or cancer. Under section 3 of the amended bill it also applies to seizure disorders, epilepsy, muscular spasticity, glaucoma, HIV/AIDS, Lou Gehrig’s Disease, multiple sclerosis or any other medical condition or its treatment that is approved by the Department of Health. **Smoking marijuana can cause cancer in all these people.** No approved medicines are smoked. It is difficult to administer safe and regulated dosages of medicines in smoked form. Furthermore, studies show that use of marijuana can create entirely new health problems. [FN1] Please read the attached studies. For example:

1. A recent study from Harvard Medical School shows that marijuana use in any form by people with HIV/AIDS opens the door for the virus that causes Kaposi’s Sarcoma an often fatal form of cancer. In addition, contaminants of marijuana smoke contain bacteria and fungi. This puts those with impaired immunity at risk such as those with HIV/AIDS. [FN2]
2. A recent study shows that marijuana smoke has ammonia levels 20 times higher than tobacco smoke. Marijuana has hydrogen cyanide, nitric oxide, and aromatic amines at 3-5 times higher than tobacco smoke. [FN3] There has been a great public effort in New Jersey to curtail tobacco because of its effects on health but the advocates of “medical” marijuana still promote smoking marijuana. Do we want people smoking marijuana around kids?
3. Another study shows that that marijuana smokers face rapid lung destruction - as much as 20 years ahead of tobacco smokers. [FN4]
4. A just released study shows that marijuana damages DNA and that it is toxic to the body. [FN5]

For a drug to be acceptable, its beneficial results must outweigh the adverse effects, especially when the claim is made that it can be used repeatedly as “medicine.” Although the bill intends to help people, an unintended consequence of using marijuana is that it will harm people. Until we know more, please do not approve marijuana as medicine.

References:

Marijuana Damages DNA And May Cause Cancer, New Test Reveals <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/06/090615095940.htm>

Marijuana Smoke Contains Higher Levels Of Certain Toxins Than Tobacco Smoke <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/12/071217110328.htm>

Marijuana Smokers Face Rapid Lung Destruction -- As Much As 20 Years Ahead Of Tobacco Smokers <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/01/080123104017.htm>

Impact On Lungs Of One Cannabis Joint Equal To Up To Five  
Cigarettes <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/07/070731085550.htm>

Marijuana Component Opens The Door For Virus That Causes Kaposi's Sarcoma (link to Harvard study) <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/08/070801112156.htm>

[FN1] Wu et al., Pulmonary hazards of smoking marijuana as compared with tobacco, NEJM, 1988:318:347-351; Barbers et al., Differential examination of bronchoalveolar lavage ceus in tobacco cigarette and marijuana smokers, Am Rev Respir Dis 1987:135:1271-1275; Fligiel et al., Bronchial pathology in chronic marijuana smokers: a light and electron microscopic study, Journal of Psychoactive Drugs 1988:20:33-42; Gong et al., Acute and subacute bronchial effects of oral cannabinoids, Clin Pharmacol There. 1984:35:26-32; Tashkin, Is frequent marijuana smoking harmful to health? Western Journal of Medicine 1993:158:635-637; Tashkin et al., Respiratory status of seventy-four habitual marijuana smokers, Chest 1980:78:699-706; Tashkin, Shapiro, Lee & Harper, Subacute effects of heavy marijuana smoking on pulmonary function in healthy men, NEJM 1976:294:125-129; Tashkin, Sirons & Clark, Effect of habitual smoking of marijuana alone and with tobacco on nonspecific airways hyperreactivity, Journal of Psychoactive Drugs 1988:20:21-25; Tilles et al., Marijuana smoking as cause of reduction in single-breath carbon monoxide diffusing capacity, American Journal of Medicine 1986:80:601-606; Barbers et al., Chemotaxis of peripheral blood and lung leukocytes obtained from tobacco and marijuana smokers, Journal of Psychoactive Drugs 1988:20:15-20; Buckley, A case-control study of acute non-lymphoblastic leukemia: evidence for an association with marijuana exposure, Cannabis: Physiopathology, Epidemiology, Detection pp. 155-162 (CRC Press 1993); Murison et al., Cannabinoids induce incomplete maturation of cultured human leukemia cells, Proc Natl Acad Sci USA 1987:84:5414-5418

[FN2] "Marijuana Component Opens The Door For Virus That Causes Kaposi's Sarcoma" -Science Daily, 2 August 2007; Fleisher, Winawer & Zauber, Aspergillosis and marijuana, Annals of Internal Medicine 1991:115:578-579; Ramirez, Acute pulmonary histoplasmosis: newly recognized hazard of marijuana plant hunters, American Journal of Medicine 1990:88:5-60N-5-62N; Taylor et al., Salmonellosis associated with marijuana: a multi state outbreak traced by plasmid fingerprinting, NEJM 1982:306:1249-1254.

[FN3] Marijuana Smoke Contains Higher Levels of Certain Toxins Than Tobacco Smoke, Science Daily, December 18, 2007

[FN4] Marijuana Smokers Face Rapid Lung Destruction - As Much as 20 Years Ahead of Tobacco Smokers, Science Daily, January 27, 2008

[FN5] Marijuana Damages DNA and May Cause Cancer, New Test Reveals, Science Daily, June 15, 2009