

Wyoming Medical Society
Position Statement on the Legalization of Medical Marijuana via Ballot Initiative
August 2015

Background

The National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws has filed a petition with the Wyoming Secretary of State's office in hopes of gathering the signatures necessary to get a question on the ballot to legalize medical marijuana.

The Wyoming chapter of National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws must collect 25,673 signatures of registered voters by Feb. 8, 2015 to get the question on the ballot for the 2016 general election.

According to its Website, NORML's mission is to move public opinion sufficiently to legalize the responsible use of marijuana by adults, and to serve as an advocate for consumers to assure they have access to high quality marijuana that is safe, convenient and affordable.

In addition to the work being done on behalf of NORML, The Wyoming Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police is gauging interest in starting a statewide outreach effort to inform residents on the "harmful personal and societal effects of marijuana." Byron Oedekoven, executive director of the group, has reached out to the Wyoming Medical Society in hopes it will join his coalition of those opposed to the legalization of medical marijuana.

In developing its position, the Wyoming Medical Society has:

- Analysed data from the American Association of Pediatrics (AAP), in particular its Jan. 2015 reaffirmation of its position opposing the legalization of marijuana for either medical or recreational use. The AAP opposes medical marijuana outside of the usual process by the Food and Drug Administration to approve pharmaceutical products. The AAP offers caution that the increased availability of marijuana to adults will increase access for teens. It is well-documented that THC can be detrimental to the adolescent brain.

- Consulted with the Colorado Medical Society regarding its members experiences with medical marijuana.

- Discussed the subject of medical marijuana with its executive committee of its board of directors - a panel of seven Wyoming physicians including a neurologist, family practice physicians and others. The Executive Committee of the WMS has crafted this position.

Position Statement

The WMS opposes medical marijuana outside of the regulatory process of the US Food and Drug Administration, recognizing however that marijuana may be an option for cannabinoid administration for children and adults with life-limiting or severely debilitating conditions for whom current therapies are inadequate. The WMS does recognize published and fact-based scientific data that the recreational use of marijuana

has a deleterious effect on the health of individuals, particularly on the developing brains of adolescents and the direct effects of smoke and secondhand smoke.

The Wyoming Medical Society Recommends

- Much like the AAP, the WMS supports continued research on pharmaceutical cannabinoids. It applauds the State of Colorado for putting nearly \$10 million into research of the effects of marijuana on a number of conditions, such as epilepsy.
- Should medical marijuana be legalized, it should be contained in child-proof packaging to prevent accidental ingestion.
- The federal and state governments should establish robust health surveillance regarding the impact of marijuana, particularly on children and adolescents.
- The WMS discourages adults from using marijuana in the presence of children.