

Marijuana as Medicine Summit

SHOULD MARIJUANA BE MEDICINE?

This question is debated across the United States. Key questions and answers to consider are addressed herein.

Questions and Answers

What does federal law say?

Under federal (U.S.) law, marijuana use, possession, and sale are still illegal, regardless of individual state laws. But the federal government is not aggressively pursuing many marijuana-related federal law violations in states with marijuana-as-medicine laws.

What does Ohio law say?

Under Ohio law, marijuana is not considered medicine and remains an illegal drug for use, possession, and sale. Bills to allow medicinal use of marijuana in Ohio have been introduced within the Ohio Legislature, but have not gained much traction.

Does marijuana have medicinal properties?

While some research exists that indicates marijuana may be helpful for some conditions, including glaucoma, pain, nausea, and loss of appetite, the research is not consistent nor substantial.

Does marijuana have harmful effects?

The research on harmful effects of marijuana is more substantial. Research shows health risks from marijuana use, including cancer, increased heart rate,

and addiction, among other risks.

Research also demonstrates significant impairment risks from marijuana use, including impact on attention, reflexes and reaction time, depth perception, and short-term memory loss.

How do we get a more conclusive answer?

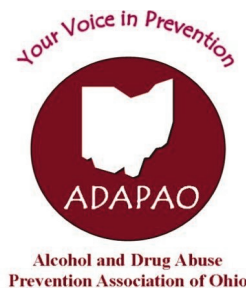
More research on marijuana is needed to determine many things about the drug as a potential medicine, from potential benefit countered against risk to analysis of the various chemicals within the marijuana plant. Should marijuana demonstrate consistent medicinal value, questions about dosage levels, methods of delivery, and purity must also be considered.

Who should decide if marijuana can be used medicinally?

In the U.S., our system of medicine consideration and approval is the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The FDA is the sole federal agency that approves drug products as safe and effective.

Why shouldn't voters or legislators decide?

The general public isn't qualified to determine what is medicine. Neither are our legislators. We didn't go to the ballot box to vote on penicillin. Our legislators



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never voted on Vicodin. What is medicine should be determined by scientific process that includes research and clinical trials.

What harm can result by determining medicine through voter or legislative initiatives?

Without appropriate scientific study, we risk not identifying chemicals in marijuana that may be harmful — or helpful — to patients. We also see increased “recreational” use among youth in states that have passed marijuana-as-medicine laws. (*National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 1999-2006.*)

What about people with significant illnesses who depend on marijuana for relief?

While we can have empathy for individual people, it is in the interest of every patient’s health and well-being that any potential medications are proven safe and effective under FDA standards.

How should we proceed on this issue?

Marijuana should be subjected to the same research, consideration and study as any other potential medicine — through the FDA. Our government should also be conducting more research to provide the best, most complete data for FDA consideration.