

Contact:

Laura A. Green, Coalition Director  
Kansas Compassionate Care Coalition  
785-856-9001 (office) or 785-550-4757 (mobile)

[laura@ksccc.org](mailto:laura@ksccc.org)

[www.ksccc.org](http://www.ksccc.org)

### **Compassion, Cancer and moral responsibility drive former AG**

*Robert T. Stephan asks Kansans to join him in supporting Kansas Compassionate Care Coalition*

**Topeka, KS** – In a press conference at the Kansas Statehouse today, former Kansas Attorney General Robert Stephan called on Kansas to join 12 other states in passing legislation that allows physicians to recommend and patients to use marijuana for medical purposes.

Stephan, who served as the state's chief law enforcement officer from 1979 until 1995, said he believes the state has an obligation to ensure that citizens suffering from debilitating medical conditions have access to all potentially beneficial treatments, including medicinal marijuana.

"As a cancer survivor myself, I've had an opportunity to examine this issue in some detail," Stephan said. "And everything I have learned has convinced me that for many ill people, marijuana is the only effective relief. This is particularly true for chronic pain and some end-of-life conditions, including cancer and AIDS."

Stephan said studies have shown that under the supervision and direction of a physician, marijuana can be a safe and effective alternative to conventional medication.

Stephan emphasized that he is not advocating legalization of the drug. Nonetheless, he said he did not believe the state should preempt the role of the physician when it comes to deciding what's best for ill Kansans.

**"We have a moral and ethical responsibility to protect law-abiding citizens from the risk and trauma of arrest, prosecution, conviction and prison simply because they've attempted to gain relief from a serious physical condition,"** Stephan wrote in an open letter to Kansans. The letter was written on behalf of the Kansas Compassionate Care Coalition, a grassroots organization dedicated to changing state law to allow for the limited use of marijuana for medical purposes.

Currently, the possession of any amount of marijuana in Kansas, for whatever purpose, is punishable by up to one year in jail and a fine of up to \$2,500.

Stephan has a long history of supporting medical marijuana use. As vice-president of the National Association of Attorneys General in 1983, he spearheaded passage of a resolution calling for legislation to make marijuana available on a prescription basis.

Stephan today serves as legal advisor to the Kansas Compassionate Care Coalition. He is currently in private practice in Lenexa, Kansas, and serves on the President's Council of the National Association of Attorneys General.

The Kansas Compassionate Care Coalition advocates for the legal protection of patients who use medical marijuana and for physicians who recommend the drug as part of a treatment program. The group, which currently has more than 400 members with chapters in northeast Kansas and Wichita, includes concerned patients, doctors, nurses, caregivers and others. For more information, see the coalition website, [www.ksccc.org](http://www.ksccc.org).