

Facts behind the Myths about Medical Marijuana

Myth #1 - Leaf marijuana is not medicine.

The U.S. Government supplies a handful of patients with 300 marijuana-cigarettes every 25 days, and has for over 27 years. It is simply not true that our government does not believe leaf marijuana is not medicine.

Myth #2 - It is a harmful psychoactive drug, composed of over 400 different chemicals, which should not be used by anyone, especially by people who are ill.

All medicines have some negative side effects—just look at Oxycontin which is the most widely prescribed pain medication in the U.S. The question is: Do the benefits outweigh the risks? That should be decided by a doctor, not the criminal justice system.

Myth #3 - In the last several years, the public has seen the issue of the therapeutic applications of leaf marijuana reach the level of discussions of public policy. This movement has been fueled by the forces seeking to legalize marijuana. By having marijuana listed as a medicine they hope to "legitimize" marijuana.

Many prestigious medical associations such as the American Association of Public Health and the American Nurses Association have called upon Congress to make medical marijuana available to patients. None of these organizations are being run by forces seeking to legalize marijuana.

The voters in the eight states overwhelmingly passed laws to make marijuana legal for people under the care of a physician. It is unlikely that all these people are seeking to legalize marijuana for recreational use.

Myth #4 - Smoked marijuana is neither an acceptable medical treatment nor an alternative medical treatment for any illness.

There is abundant scientific research—including a two-year study by the United States Institute of Medicine—that have all concluded that for some people marijuana is effective medicine for all kinds of conditions (including wasting syndrome, nausea, appetite loss, and pain just to name a few.) In addition, the FDA prescribes leaf marijuana to a handful of patients in the US currently, so it is an acceptable medical treatment at the federal level.

Myth #5 - Marijuana use has serious health consequences. Concentration, motor coordination, memory, lungs, reproductive and immune systems are all adversely impacted by marijuana use; marijuana is addictive.

Many otherwise-illegal drugs are prescribed by physicians, and Oxycontin, which is the most addictive painkiller in the U.S., is also the most widely prescribed. Does the fact that marijuana has health risks justify sending people to jail for it with their doctor's recommendation?

Myth #6 - Physicians who treat people for cancer, AIDS, glaucoma, and other diseases do not favor the use of marijuana.

This is simply not true. The New England Journal of Medicine reported in 2005 that 115,000 people had obtained medical marijuana registration cards through their physician in the states where it is legal. We would have to assume there are many thousands more since several states have also legalized it since then.

Myth #7 - Not one American health organization accepts marijuana as medicine.

The American Public Health Association, American Nurses Association, American Preventative Health Association, the American Academy of HIV Medicine, American Society of Addiction Medicine, Federation of American Scientists, and Medical Associations in New York, California, Florida, Texas, Vermont, Rhode Island are all American Health Associations, and they all accept marijuana as medicine, or potential medicine under the right circumstances for some conditions.

Myth #8 - None of these organizations accept marijuana as medicine including the American Medical Association, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, American Glaucoma Society, American Academy of Ophthalmology, and American Cancer Society

None of these organizations have stated positions on medical marijuana, many of them support research at the federal level—which has been blocked by the DEA for many years.

None of these medical associations accept that it is appropriate to arrest and prosecute someone who uses marijuana under the recommendation of their physician either.

Further, all of these organizations support the right of a physician to treat a patient as they best see fit without government interference.

Myth #9 - FDA/DEA has repeatedly rejected marijuana for medicinal use.

This is absolutely false. The DEA's own Administrative Law Judge, Francis Young, ruled in 1988 after hearing two years of testimony that marijuana should be rescheduled and made available for patients. The DEA rejected the ruling and has been arresting patients *and* until 2002 *DOCTORS* have been arrested for recommending the use of medical marijuana to patients.

The FDA gives a handful of people marijuana every 25 days, and has for over 27 years, so they certainly accept marijuana as medicine.

Myth #10 - Marijuana fails to meet any of the Drug Enforcement Administration's requirements or Federal Drug Administration's eight criteria for approving drugs for medical use.

There are LEGAL federal medical marijuana patients who receive 300 marijuana cigarettes every 25 days from the federal government and have for over 27 years so this is simply not true.

Myth #11 - Even Marinol, a synthetic form of THC (Tetrahydrocannabinol), available by prescription for treating nausea, has far more negative health effects than the other available agents.

Because Marinol has negative side-effects should people should go to jail for taking it if their doctor thinks it's appropriate? No. Many common drugs have side-effects, including Advil and Alleve, yet people are not arrested for using them.

Myth #12 - There are numerous safer and more effective anti-nausea agents These include prochlorperazine (Compazine), Metaclopramide (Reglan), lorazepam, corticosteroids, thiethylperazine (Torecan), ondansetron (Zofran), promethazine (Phenergan), perphenazine (Trilafon), and chlorpromazine.

Yes, there are many drugs on the market to treat the same condition, which is very fortunate for patients, because different people respond in different ways to different medicines. The real question is, if marijuana is recommend by a physician because it may benefit a patient, should the patient have to risk going to jail for trying it?

Myth #13 - Pro-drug lobby exploits the suffering of patients with chronic illnesses with false promises about marijuana as medicine.

78% of Americans believe that adults should be able to use marijuana if their doctor recommends it. It is not true that 78% of Americans are exploiting people's suffering.

Myth #14 - Promoters of drug legalization have stated that they are pushing marijuana as medicine and using it as a "red herring" as part of a strategy to legalize marijuana for general use.

The Kansas Compassionate Care Coalition, our coalition members, volunteers, coalition partners, and board members do support the legalization of marijuana for medical purposes as long as a physician recommends its use, and the physician is licensed to practice in the state of Kansas.