

CASAC MARIJUANA POLICY STATEMENTS

The following statements on the use of marijuana and medical marijuana have been approved by the Chautauqua Alcoholism & Substance Abuse Council, Inc. (CASAC) Board of Directors.

Marijuana in smoked form is unsuitable as a medicine. The CASAC Board concurs with the American Medical Association (AMA) statement on this.

Politically prescribing medicine rather than scientifically prescribing it through the Food and Drug Administration is dangerous. Smoked marijuana does not meet the standards of modern medicine. There is no scientific research on marijuana's effectiveness and risks as a medicine, its interactions with other drugs, and its impact on pre-existing conditions. Studies on marijuana do not exist that can be used to establish safe dosing levels, frequency and duration of administration, route, or method of administration for any medical condition.

CASAC notes that medical marijuana already exists in the form of Marinol. This FDA-approved pharmaceutical product in pill form is widely available through prescription. The active ingredient is synthetic THC and has been found to relieve nausea and vomiting associated with chemotherapy and to assist with the loss of appetite.

Permitting the use of smoked marijuana for medicinal purposes affords the drug a degree of legitimacy it does not deserve. Youth are especially vulnerable to the mixed messages sent by state medical marijuana programs. Of 11 states with medical marijuana laws by 1999, all ranked above the national average in the percentage of persons 12 or older reporting past-month use of marijuana.

No medication should be utilized without the formal approval of the U.S. Food & Drug Administration, regardless of the action of state legislatures. Marijuana grown and provided for legal medical use should be scheduled and monitored under FDA oversight. It should be held to the same FDA standards imposed on other prescription drugs including warnings, labeling, and the ordering and filling of prescriptions.

CASAC is opposed to the use of marijuana as a recreational drug. Research on the health and safety effects of marijuana strongly correlates with many mental, emotional, psychological, physical, and spiritual problems. In addition, many crimes, accidents, job and school performance problems have been associated with the use of marijuana.

While not everyone who uses marijuana becomes dependent, the reality is that as with alcohol and other drugs, marijuana use can lead to profound, chronic and progressive chemical dependency. Its use can be very serious, dangerous, and have a profound impact on the quality of life for hundreds of thousands of Americans and their families.

Adopted by the Chautauqua Alcoholism & Substance Abuse Council, Inc. Board of Directors on April 11, 2012.



Arnold Zdrojewski/CASAC Board President

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Information used in these policies statements came from the American Medical Association and The New York State Environmental Prevention Task Force which consists of over 90 state-wide community coalitions, prevention providers and others working together to address alcohol and drug policy issues as they affect New York State youth.

References: Eddy, Mark. *Medical Marijuana: Review and Analysis of Federal and State Policies*. Published: April 2, 2010, Accessed February 1, 2012. <http://medicalmarijuana.procon.org/sourcefiles/MedicalMarijuanaStatePolicies040210.pdf>.

Issue Briefing #4: Medical Marijuana. Council on Addictions of New York State, Inc. (CANYS). Revised October 10, 2009, accessed February 1, 2012. <http://www.canys.net/images/CannabisBrief%20-%20Final%20-%2010.10.09.pdf>.

"Medical" Marijuana – The Facts. U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. Accessed February 1, 2012. <http://www.justice.gov/dea/ongoing/marinol.html>.