

# The Definitive Marijuana Discussion: A Historical Review, Situational Analysis, and Future Projection

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CCSAD Disclosure of Relevant Financial Relationships  
 Content of Activity: The Definitive Marijuana Discussion:  
 A Historical Review, Situational Analysis, and  
 Future Projection  
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| Name                           | Commercial Interests | Relevant Financial Relationships: What Was Received | Relevant Financial Relationships: For What Role   | No Relevant Financial Relationships with Any Commercial Interests |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|---|---|---|
| Andrea G. Barthwell, MD, FASAM | N/A                  | N/A   | <b>Caron Foundation:</b> Collaborator<br><b>Alvee Laboratories:</b> Consultant<br><b>Braeburn Pharmaceuticals:</b> Consultant<br><b>Millennium Laboratories:</b> Consultant<br><b>The Parents Academy:</b> Founder<br><b>Treatment Partners LLC:</b> Managing Partner<br><b>Encounter Medical Group, PC:</b> Medical Director<br><b>EMGlobal LLC:</b> Partner<br><b>GW Pharmaceuticals:</b> Former Consultant |   |

# Objectives

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- ★ Review clinical and scientific resource materials
- ★ Review the history of the pro-legalization movement
- ★ Review the evolution of the U.S. Government's Marijuana Initiative
- ★ Review the U.S. Supreme Court decisions regarding marijuana
- ★ Describe challenges posed by state law in conflict with Federal policy

# My Opinions

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- ★ Extensive review of scientific literature
- ★ Personal communications with scientists in the area
- ★ Physician in addiction medicine
- ★ Former member of FDA advisory board
- ★ Former policy advisor to President Bush

# Starting Point

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- ★ The downside of drug use >>> than the upside
- ★ Drugs of abuse have profound, immediate, and long-term effects on the chemical balance in the brain
- ★ Those who have had a drug using experience, even if not current, are changed permanently by experience

# Principles

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- ★ Non-users can be encouraged to continue in that status or to use, the line warns off would be users
- ★ Non-dependent users have very few incentives to not use
- ★ Dependent users tend to continue using, need strategically applied pressure to discontinue use

# Politics and Science

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- ★ Politics is a process through which conflicts over values are settled
- ★ Science is a process in which conflicts regarding facts (truth) are resolved
- ★ The values that inspired the earliest controls which underpin today's policies related to basic human values of responsibility for mind and body

# The War on the “War on Drugs”

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- ★ Calls attention to the magnitude of the problem
- ★ Endemic public health problem
  - ★ Classical approaches sought
- ★ Scientific basis
- ★ Well-defined broad national goals
- ★ Be aware of unintended consequences



# Conflict in Values

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- ★ Control: to sustain and promote basic human values
- ★ Anti-control: liberty and freedom, underlying notion that unrestrained drug use in modern, complex society would not ultimately harm others

# Spending

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- ★ Washington initiative 502
  - ★ \$6 million pro v. \$16,000 anti
- ★ CO Amendment 64
  - ★ \$2 million pro v. \$.5 million anti
- ★ Shifts in public opinion
  - ★ 1968- 12%, 2013 52% agree with legalization
  - ★ 2013- 60% believe the Federal government should not enforce marijuana laws

# Role of the Federal Government


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- ★ Prohibit manufacture
- ★ Prohibit distribution
- ★ Prohibit dispensation
- ★ Prohibit possession



# What Can the Federal Government Do?


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- ★ Impede full implementation of legal retail cannabis 
- ★ With what?
  - ★ Political will
  - ★ Manpower
  - ★ Public support

# The Marijuana Problem: TRENDS

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- ★ Increased use
  - ★ Increased availability from Mexico
  - ★ Reduced eradication in Mexico
  - ★ Increased U.S. cultivation by criminal networks
  - ★ Average age of initiation decreasing
  - ★ Marijuana potency is increasing
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# Increased Availability Leads to Increased Health and Safety Costs



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- ★ Legality increases the availability and acceptability
  - ★ Availability and acceptability leads to increased consumption
  - ★ Consumption leads to higher public health and financial costs
    - ★ Costs outstrip taxation
    - ★ The cost to society of alcohol alone is estimated to be more than 15 times the revenue gained by their taxation
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# Public Health Concerns

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- ★ Use can lead to dependence and addiction, need for treatment
- ★ Use is associated with disease, and cognitive impairment
  - ★ IQ drops
  - ★ Adolescent Thought Disorders
  - ★ Inability to learn from life experiences
  - ★ Rote learning impairment
  - ★ Short-term memory impairments
  - ★ Boomer Brain Disorder
- ★ Use drives ER visits
- ★ Demand associated with selective breeding of plant
- ★ Commercialization associated with marketing and demand

# The Marijuana Problem

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- ★ Most commonly used illicit drug across the world
- ★ Most widely used illicit drug in America
- ★ 2012- 18.9 million users over age 12 (7.3%)
- ★ Of 5.6 million suffering, 62% are using marijuana
- ★ Young people represent 23% of the suffering population



# Legalization Will NOT Solve Public Health or Safety Challenges

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- ★ Recent reports from the nonpartisan RAND Institute found that the potential economic benefits from legalization had been overstated
  - ★ Marijuana legalization would not eliminate the black market for the drug.
  - ★ Dramatically lowered prices could mean substantially lower potential tax revenue for states.
- ★ Taxation implicates individuals for federal prosecution, therefore, is illegal
- ★ More recreational marijuana than marijuana for medically compromised individuals in Colorado
  - ★ No way to discern source of marijuana

# Three State Strategies


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- ★ Legal exception for use by medically compromised individuals
- ★ Legalization of personal use for “recreation”
- ★ Decriminalization
  - ★ Variety of terms of legalization, regulation, taxation

# Marijuana Legalization

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- ★ **Legal exception for use by Medically compromised individuals** – defense criminal charges of possession of qualified individuals
    - ★ Also regulate and authorize marijuana production and use
    - ★ Acknowledge that possession is in violation of federal law
  - ★ **Marijuana Decriminalization**– Reduce the penalties for possession and use of small amounts of marijuana from criminal sanctions to fines or civil penalties.
    - ★ Acknowledge that possession is in violation of federal law
    - ★ Does not allow manufacture or distribution of marijuana
  - ★ **Recreational Legalization**- removes all state imposed penalties
    - ★ in CO and WA legalize, regulate, tax marijuana
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# Despite Claims, Health Care Costs Rise

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- ★ Increased availability increases casual users
  - ★ More casual use, more progression
  - ★ More progression, more addiction
  - ★ More addiction, more cost
- ★ Less addictive drugs teach us that the higher the percentage addiction, the higher the cost
- ★ Capture rates: Alcohol 15% lifetime; marijuana 9% lifetime (17% if young, 25-50% if daily); cocaine 4% who try, 20% after 2 years; heroin 23%; tobacco 32%



# Economics of Legalization are Internally Contradictory



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- ★ Unless 100% given away, there will be black market 
- ★ Price elasticity fluctuates
  - ★ Perceived luxury first time to inescapable necessity later

# Crime Would Rise, Not Fall

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- ★ Most crime is state level
- ★ 80% in 1 of 3 types
  - ★ Committed by those on drugs
  - ★ Committed by those needing money to get drugs
  - ★ Committed as distribution of drugs
- ★ Most not imprisoned for possession, those who are made a plea bargain from distribution
- ★ Legalization would not reduce these categories

# Nicotine Notes

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- ★ Social policies- label, restrict advertising
- ★ Public health policies- taxation, patches
- ★ 40 years after recognized harms still have 42 million cigarette addicts
- ★ 2 million cocaine users, 500,000 crack users- avoids harm
- ★ Nicotine's easy availability, lax legal controls make it more desirable target



# Harm Reduction's Harms

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- ★ Non-using norm lessened as illegality, dangers, and social consequences made ambiguous (see “successful” users)
- ★ Non-dependent users don't get message to stop (use safely)
- ★ Dependent users get reinforcement to use and lessened incentive to stop (strengthens resolve to use)








# ONDCP's Marijuana Initiative (c. 2003)

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- ★ Negative consequences of youth use introduced in national youth anti-drug campaign
  - ★ Launch of integrated, multi-faceted ads
    - ★ Intervene with friends
    - ★ Convince youth of ability to take action
    - ★ Give tools and skills to intervene
    - ★ Communicate to adults to intervene early
  - ★ Switched target group from 11-13 year olds to 14-16 year olds
  - ★ Reverse spends from 60% adult/40% youth to 40% adult/60% youth
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# Marijuana Initiative continued

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- ★ Resource materials
- ★ Video News Releases
- ★ Power Points
- ★ Publications
- ★ Uniform talking Points

# Debunking the Myths

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- ★ Marijuana is harmless
- ★ Marijuana is not addictive
- ★ Youth experimentation is inevitable
- ★ The criminalization of marijuana use is what leads to crime, not the drug itself

# The Treatment Program's Responsibility

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- ★ Abstinence is primary
- ★ Program implementation is the patient's effort
- ★ Long-term focus required
- ★ Change is key
- ★ Mental status evaluation required
- ★ Family involvement is important
- ★ Confrontation may be necessary
- ★ Monitoring is essential
- ★ Community is valuable

# Responsibility continued

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- ★ Periodic contact is necessary
- ★ Peer support is transformative
- ★ Pharmacologic support may be helpful
- ★ Therapy is useful
- ★ Diet and exercise is important
- ★ Withdrawal is problematic
- ★ Hospitalization should be considered
- ★ Education is vital
- ★ Identification improves morale

**\*YOU SET THE STANDARD\***

# Resources

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- ★ ASAM website for PPC (<http://www.asam.org/publications/patient-placement-criteria/ppc-2r>)
- ★ Two Dreams (<http://www.twodreams.com>)
- ★ Dr. AGB (<https://twitter.com/dragb>)
- ★ Dr. AGB Goes to Back Rehab (<http://drbarthwell.wordpress.com/>)

# Thank You!

Questions?

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