

# Medicinal pot eases suffering

Maggie Wolcott  
Staff Reporter

The elderly might not be the section of society considered likely to be "potheads," but some feel they have a good reason to light up.

People undergoing treatments for serious illness might find some relief in smoking marijuana or taking drugs like Marinol.

The same active ingredient that is found in marijuana, cannabinoid, is found in Marinol, which is being used to treat critically ill patients. It is most commonly used with AIDS patients but also has been used in cancer treatment. Marinol is a legal prescription drug, according to NORML's Web site.

Although laws on recreational use of marijuana are zero-tolerance, marijuana for medicinal purposes has been questioned at the city, state and federal levels.

Twenty-six states have laws and resolutions about medicinal marijuana, according to CNN.com. Some states have established therapeutic research programs, and others have asked the federal government to allow for medicinal marijuana use.

Students enrolled in a fall 2004 criminal law class examined a medicinal marijuana case that was before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Martin Jayne, associate professor of justice systems, said his criminal law classes write a paper based on a case that is currently before the U.S. Supreme Court.

He said that in the case, medical marijuana had been made legal under California law but not under federal law. He said the question before the court was whether the U.S. Congress has the power to regulate marijuana under the commerce clause, and the court ruled Congress does have the power.

Jayne said another case involving marijuana law would not appear before the Supreme Court again anytime soon.

"The [Supreme] Court certainly is not going to find there is a constitutional right to use any particular marijuana," Jayne said.

Senior Mary Anderson said she does not think marijuana should be legalized because of the short- and long-term health effects.

"I am just afraid if it is legalized more people will start to use it for the wrong reasons, and I don't think that is a good thing," Anderson said.

Anderson said marijuana should not be used for medicinal purposes either.

"I think there are other drugs out there that are available that will have the same effects," Anderson said.

Talia Harris, an oncology nurse with the George Rae Treatment Center in Kirksville, said Marinol helps with nausea and increases appetite, which is typically low while undergoing chemotherapy treatment.

She said Marinol was successful in helping two cancer patients she has seen who were undergoing treatment.

"I think it helps with their pain and their symptoms, and they did just fine," she said.

She said people might be opposed to it because it contains marijuana, and people associate it with hippies and getting high.

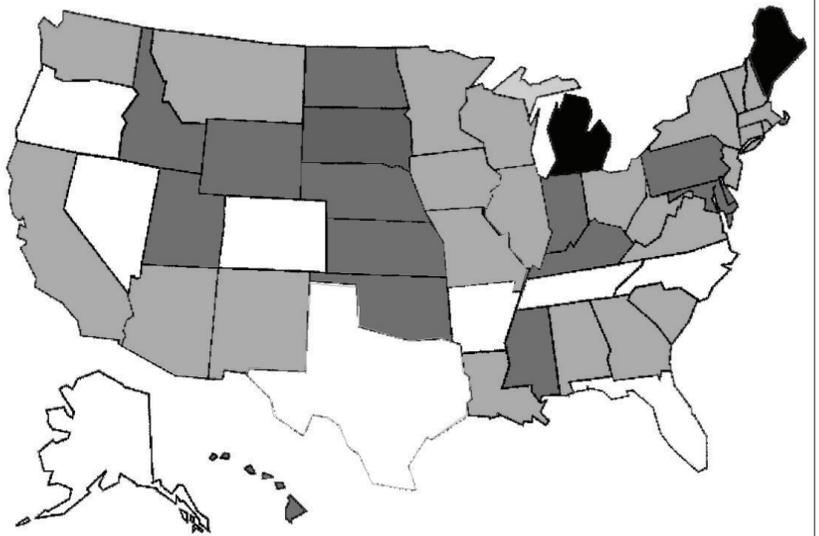
"I think [people] are just overwhelmed with the aspect that the government is now allowing people to take it as an actual drug of choice for pain," she said.



Chris Waller/Index  
The Department of Public Safety made four drug-related arrests in 2004, and all were marijuana-related, Director Tom Johnson said. In Missouri it is illegal to use or possess marijuana, even for medicinal purposes. He said he doesn't think marijuana is a big problem on campus, although it is always a concern.

## Marijuana Laws Across the Nation

-  States with medicinal marijuana legislation or resolution
-  States with no medicinal marijuana legislation
-  States where medicinal marijuana legislations have expired
-  States where medicinal marijuana laws have been repealed



Designed by Victoria Weaver/Index  
Source: www.cnn.com

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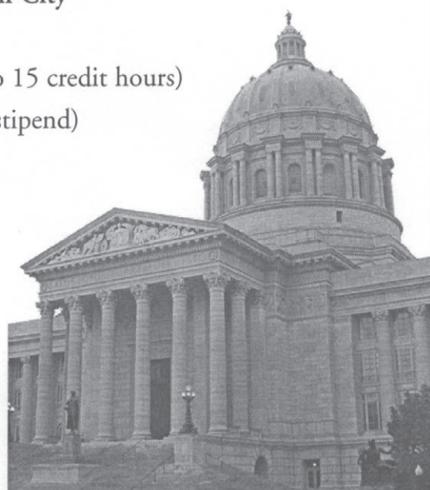
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