



Treat Addiction. Save Lives.

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE REVIEW

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AMERICAN SOCIETY OF ADDICTION MEDICINE REITERATES ASAM MARIJUANA POLICY POSITIONS

CHEVY CHASE, MD, October 27, 2011 – Since 1994, the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) has held as policy that we oppose any changes in law and regulation that would lead to a sudden significant increase in the availability of any dependence-producing drug (outside of a medically-prescribed setting for therapeutic indications). This policy includes marijuana, a mood-altering drug capable of producing dependence as well as serious negative mental, emotional, behavioral and physical consequences.

ASAM recognizes the therapeutic potential of cannabis and cannabinoids, given the recent discovery of the human endocannabinoid receptor system, and supports increased funding for research on marijuana that explores the mechanisms of its action, its effects on the human body, and the potential for its clinical applications. However, ASAM insists that marijuana, like any other drug, be subject to federal standards for drug approval that establish safety, efficacy and purity and distribution that limits nonmedical uses and diversion.

“ASAM supports continued research on certain cannabinoids with the goal of identifying specific therapeutic applications in line with the 1999 Institute of Medicine study. Until sufficient research in this area exists, ASAM cannot endorse the legalization of the use of marijuana either as a 'medicine' or for any other sanctioned use of this drug,” said Stuart Gitlow, MD, MBA, MPH, FAPA, Acting President of ASAM. “Furthermore, smoking any drug is an unhealthy form of drug delivery.”

Marijuana is the nation’s most commonly used illicit drug. More than 60% of Americans who meet criteria for substance abuse or addiction do so as a result of their marijuana use. (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Results from the 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings, NSDUH Series H-41, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 11-4658. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2011.)

To read our Public Policy Statement on National Drug Policy, visit:

<http://www.asam.org/NationalDrugPolicy.html>.

To read our Public Policy Statement on Marijuana, visit:

<http://www.asam.org/1MARIJUANA%205-062.pdf>.

To read our Public Policy Statement on Medical Marijuana visit:

<http://www.asam.org/MedicalMarijuana.html>.

To read our White Paper, The Role of the Physician in “Medical” Marijuana, visit:

<http://www.asam.org/pdf/Advocacy/MedMarijuanaWhitePaper20110314.pdf>

The American Society for Addiction Medicine is a professional society representing close to 3,000 physicians dedicated to increasing access and improving quality of addiction treatment, educating physicians and the public, supporting research and prevention, and promoting the appropriate role of physicians in the care of patients with addictions.

American Society of Addiction Medicine

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