

the compassionate VOICE



Newsletter of the BCCCS

April/May/June 2013

Local Cannabis Law Movements

With the new Health Canada regulations set to take effect on 31 March 2014 (and with the winding down of the MMAP regime starting this spring), a number of campaigns are under way in the province of BC to ensure that patients get safe, affordable access to their medicine.

Sensible BC is asking the province to pass the Sensible Policing Act to stop police from searching people for possession of cannabis. The campaign requires 400,000 signatures from BC; if you would like to sign, find the form at the Front Desk. To get more involved in the campaign, visit SensibleBC.ca for a number of other ways to help, including becoming a Sensible BC canvasser, posting to Facebook/Twitter, emailing BC Premier Christy Clark and organizing Sensible BC events.

The BC chapter of the Canadian Medical Cannabis Partners (CMCP) has been lobbying for the provincial regulation of

medical cannabis dispensaries like the BCCCS. The CMCP is now calling for a provincial medical cannabis program under Section 56 of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (this was the exemption that allowed for the setup of the Insite needle exchange program). To support this initiative, find and sign CMCP's petition on Avaaz.org to let current and future BC legislative representatives know about the importance of medical cannabis dispensaries.

The MMAR PPL/DPL Coalition Against Repeal has been formed to represent those with personal and designated production licenses that stand to lose these under the changeover to MMPR. The Coalition plans to prevent some or all of the MMPR from coming into effect or at least make sure that patients have a right to access via personal and designated production. To support, check out its site MMARCoalitionAgainstRepeal.com.



Under One Umbrella

2013 was our second year attending Under One Umbrella service providers' gathering. This March event brings together several service organizations in one place - the Maritime Labour Centre.

The event was an opportunity for us to make connections with other service providers such as Coast Mental Health, as well as people in need of medical cannabis. Thanks to Riel, Setareh and Buttons for tabling.



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Cannabis Health Perceptions

A large-scale study was published in the *Journal of Pharmacology* by the University College of London's Clinical Psychopharmacology Unit that surveyed the experiences of 5,791 individuals with regard to 15 commonly used drugs.

The subjects, from 40 different countries, ranked cannabis consistently as being beneficial. Prescription analgesics, alcohol and tobacco were ranked among the top 10 most harmful drugs.

There was no correlation between users' harm ranking of drugs and their classification in schedules in the USA or UK. The findings hence showed that the US and UK classification systems do not actually inform users about the harms of psychoactive substances.

A separate study was published by the University Medical Center Utrecht Department of Psychiatry in the Netherlands

that that cigarette smoking was as much associated with psychotic-like experiences (PLE) as cannabis.

Though cannabis has been historically perceived as having an effect on psychotic disorders, the research, which was based on a study of 1,929 young adults, showed that this association is confounded by cigarette smoking as well as numerous other factors.

The study can be found in *Psychological Medicine* journal.



Comparing Mental Health

The Netherlands Institute of Mental Health and Addiction in Utrecht compared the mental health of frequent cannabis users with that of the general population.

The study, which is available in *Addiction* journal, looked at 521 frequent cannabis users as compared to 1,072 young adults between the ages of 18 and 30 in the general population.

Researchers concluded that, "with the exception of more externalizing disorders, the mental health condition of non-dependent frequent cannabis users is similar to that of the general population."

They also noted that associations between cannabis and mental health often became non-significant after correction for childhood adversity and substance use other than cannabis.

CBDs in Clinical Practice

Researchers and doctors will be hosting a groundbreaking conference at the University of British Columbia on June 21 about cannabinoids in cannabis.

This conference is perfect for doctors and other practitioners wanting to educate themselves about cannabis as medicine.

Conference topics will include an introduction to the endocannabinoid system, efficacy in pain, and patient case discussions. Presenters include Mark Ware, MD and Lynda Balneaves, RN PhD, as well as other noted medical professionals.

If you know doctors who would like to acquire more information/education on the cannabinoid system, please direct them to the website of conference organizers the Canadian Consortium for the Investigation of Cannabinoids (CCIC).

The International Rundown

Just a few short months after Colorado and Washington allowed the legalization of cannabis, Nevada prepared to legalize medical use. The Senate Judiciary Committee unanimously approved a bill to legalize medical cannabis dispensaries. The bill sets the framework for the establishment and regulation of dispensaries in the state. The regulations would allow the possession, purchase and use of cannabis by only registered medical cannabis patients and their caregivers.

To date, other than the two aforementioned states that have fully legalized cannabis, 19 states in the US allow its use for medical reasons, and 17 have legislation pending to legalize it.

Even as states begin to get on-board with legalization and regulation, the US federal government is scaling back its research funding of medical cannabis by 31%: since 2007 when \$131 million was allocated to such research, last

year saw just \$91 million being used for this, according to a National Institutes of Health research database.

An unrelated report by DrugPolicy.org showed that federal and state governments over the past four decades have spent \$1 trillion fighting the drug war, with about \$51 billion being spent annually.

April 4 began in Uruguay a nationwide dialogue on a proposed bill to legalize the sale and cultivation of cannabis. The nation already has decriminalized possession of all cannabis. If the bill becomes law, Uruguay would become the first country to formally legalize cannabis commerce.

In the Czech Republic, where medical cannabis is now legal, the government is looking to buy its supply from potentially either the United States or Israel: the second country is particularly becoming renown for its supply of medical cannabis.

May 5 Annual General Meeting

All BCCCS members in good standing are invited to attend the 2013 AGM.

The AGM will be held on-site at 2995 Commercial Drive, with registration beginning at 11.30 am, and the event going till 2 pm.

We will be updating on activities of the BCCCS from the past year, and electing the Board of Directors.

Please contact the Front Desk if you require proxy forms.

Refreshments will be available. No smoking on premises. Bring your membership card to speed up registration.

Staff Changes

We would like to welcome our new staff Emme, Katie, Whitney and Star.

Research On-site

We are pleased to announce that a doctor from the BC Cancer Agency (BCCA) wishes to do research on-site.

The overall intent is to provide a review of the current use of cannabis in cancer treatment as reflected by the members of the BCCCS. This will be presented as part of planned lectures at the BCCA to help educate staff about cannabis use. A review of patient cases will also be published to help provide some official information about the size and success of cannabis in cancer treatment. Currently, there are almost no publications discussing the use of cannabis and none providing information about successful therapy.

For this research to move ahead we need your consent for the doctor to review your file. If you are a member who is personally dealing with cancer and would like to take part in this research, please fill out and sign the consent form available at Front Desk.



Delicious Herbal Teas at the Wellness Centre

We have quite a few different single herbs available for purchase in the Wellness Centre. Each 25gm bag is \$4 and the Muslin tea bags are \$1 each. To make tea with any of these herbs, pour 1 cup of water, just off the boil, over 1 heaping teaspoon of the herb in a muslin bag. Let steep for 10-15 minutes covered. Squeeze the bag, remove and enjoy.

Some of the herbs that we have available:

Lavender – Great in baking, compliments chocolate and blueberries well. Place the dry herb in the muslin bag and put under your pillow to support your sleep. Uplifting.

Nettle leaf – Nutritive. Great year-round tonic. Pregnancy support. Sprinkle on soups.

Hibiscus – Tasty, zingy, tart. High in Vitamin C and

flavonoids. Great as an iced tea (put in the fridge after it has steeped)

Peppermint – Good for digestion. Tasty. Cooling as an iced tea.

Chamomile – Calming. Moisten herb in a muslin bag and apply to eyes for soothing relief. Helpful for digestion. Prepared tea can be used for a hair rinse for blondes (just make sure to let it cool)

Red Raspberry Leaf – Nutritive. Great in pregnancy. Can support you doing your period.

Cardamon – Great in baking. Great for digestion.

Catnip – Helpful for sleep. Great treat for your feline.

And more...



Ongoing Nutrition Workshops

Nutrition is a key component of good health. Learn how you can support healing by choices you make around food. Ever wonder what kind of fats to eat? Or how much protein you should be eating?

Compassion Club nutritionists Wendy and Vanessa are going to be giving workshops addressing a number of topics such as:

- Why food is so important
- Best foods/worst foods list
- How much to eat of what
- Label reading

The first workshop is already full, so check either this space or the Front Desk for the schedules of upcoming ones.

Space is limited for all the workshops, so be sure to sign up early.