

# The Compassionate Voice

Newsletter of the BCCCS



April/May/June 2012

## Canada Under C-10

On Monday 12 March 2012 Parliament passed Bill C-10, also known as the Safe Streets and Communities Act. The following day it received royal assent and became law. The Safe Streets Act is one of the most heinous pieces of legislation to have been passed through the government, and will affect those accessing medical cannabis in a number of ways.

The law will put mandatory minimum sentencing in place for persons:

- growing as few as six cannabis plants
- possessing anything over three kilograms of cannabis
- seen as "dealing" cannabis

Needless to say, the Safe Streets and Communities Act stands to affect compassion clubs, their cultivators and members.

The Conservative-backed law comes with a hefty price in terms of everything it sets out to do: it requires the building of several new prisons and the expansion of current such institutions, which means a several-fold increase in the price of holding the incarcerated.

All is not lost, however: provinces such as Ontario and Quebec have already stated that they are not fully willing to pay for the costs associated with the law, which would be high. BC's Premier Christy Clark has given only weak support to the law. Now is the time to write to your premier and voice your opposition to the cost of the law, its repercussions, and ask for the province to not pay for it. It's still possible to stop the Safe Streets Act.



## BCCCS at Under One Umbrella

Saturday 17 March was Under One Umbrella: a comprehensive service providers' fair held at the Maritime Labour Centre. BCCCS attended the fair along with dozens of other organizations providing a host of services from legal to health to housing.

The fair was large, with a room specifically for healthcare groups such as wellness practitioners, an area where

hot food of all sorts was being served, and a main room where the events and various service providers gathered together.

We'd like to thank Under One Umbrella for inviting us to the fair and for the many performances. We also appreciated being able to meet both people in need of medical cannabis and also such a wide diversity of service providers.

## Cannabinoids Inhibit Spread of HIV in late-stage AIDS

Researchers at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York discovered that cannabinoids activate receptors on certain human immune cells that directly inhibit HIV in late-stage AIDS.

HIV infects immune cells called active T cells in such a way that they cannot fight off the infection. The virus requires resting T cells to be activated in order to spread the infection. Treating these cells' receptors with a cannabinoid stopped the virus from entering the cell, thereby suppressing the infection.

Details about the study can be found in online science journal *PLoS ONE*.



## Smoking and Lung Function

Cannabis does not impair lung function - at least not in the doses inhaled by the majority of users, according to the largest and longest study ever to consider the issue, which was published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

The study was conducted over 20 years and involved 5115 subjects. Lifetime exposure to cannabis cigarettes was expressed in joint-years, with 1 joint-year of exposure equivalent to smoking 365 joints (cannabis cigarettes) or filled pipe bowls.

Not surprisingly tobacco use was associated with decreased lung function. But at least at moderate levels of cannabis smoking, that didn't seem to be the case - in fact, the trend was reversed.

It is unlikely that cannabis puts users at risk of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD, as smoking tobacco does, says Dr. Donald Tashkin, professor at the University of California in Los Angeles, who studies the effects of cannabis on the lungs for decades but wasn't involved in the new study.



BCCCS board member Dwight V. was profiled by the Vancouver Sun about cannabis for HIV/AIDS

## Cannabis Not Associated with Cognitive Impairment

Researchers at King's College in London investigated the association between illicit drug use and cognitive functioning during mid-adult years. They found "at the population level, it does not appear that current illicit drug use is associated with impaired cognitive functioning in early middle age." A total of 8,992 participants who were surveyed at 42 years of age in the years 1999 and 2000 were included. The authors analyzed data on 3 cognition tests when the participants were 50 years of age in the years 2008 and 2009.

Cannabis was by far the most common used drug of the participants with six percent saying they had used it in the past year, while one-quarter said they had ever used it. Overall, the study found, there was no evidence that current or past drug users had poorer mental performance.

For more, check out the *American Journal of Epidemiology*.

## Suicide Among Schizophrenics

According to research at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia, with 821 subjects suffering from schizophrenia there was a significant increase of suicide risk for people with alcohol abuse/dependence, but no increased risk for cannabis abuse/dependence. The study was published in *Psychiatry* journal.

## Changes to MMAP

The BCCCS is continuing to engage Health Canada on an on-going basis regarding upcoming changes to the federal Marihuana Medical Access Program (MMAP). We are doing this in collaboration with the other dispensaries nationwide that we work with as part of the Canadian Association of Medical Cannabis Dispensaries (CAMCD). We met with Health Canada officials in Ottawa in February and had discussions in Victoria regarding the new Licensed Commercial Producer category that will become the primary means of providing medical cannabis to patients by 2014.

Health Canada has been receptive to the value provided by dispensaries through on-site distribution which allows a high degree of individualized patient care and support. However, we still have a long battle over the coming year to campaign at the federal, provincial and municipal levels for the legitimization of compassion clubs. This has become more pressing as Bill C-10, the hugely backwards bill imposing mandatory prison sentences for cannabis-related offences, has passed through parliament.

The BCCCS thanks all our members for your support in this important and difficult work at the time. Please stay tuned for more information and ways you can support our efforts. Donations to the boxes in distribution at this time are being directed towards our lobbying efforts in Ottawa, so if you are able please add your contribution.



## Staff Changes

We've had several staff changes lately. Leaving the BCCCS were Sean, Matt, Alex and Jenn C.

We are also excited to welcome John F., Jamie, Tracey, Anna D. and Patty. Please take a chance to say hi if you have not already met them.



## Launch Box Vapo

Spring is in the air and those wanting to smell the daffodils instead of smoke should consider switching to a vaporizer.

Vaporizers heat cannabis to temperatures where the active cannabinoids are released without the harmful byproducts of smoking. Vaporizers retain the benefit of rapid onset, direct delivery to the bloodstream and ease of self-titration. The aroma is much more discreet than smoking as well.

New to the BCCCS Vaporizer lineup is the completely portable Launch Box. This vaporizer is simply awesome. It is portable and comes with its own rechargeable batteries and handy carrying case. Made from organic renewable hardwood and heating up in less than 5 seconds; the Launch Box is our Spring favorite. Check it out in house!

If you have suggestions, questions, or want to send a friendly hello contact: [merch@thecompassionclub.org](mailto:merch@thecompassionclub.org).

## Taxation Studies

A number of recent studies have been done on the idea of taxing and regulating medical cannabis.

The New York Times published an article in February on how several American cities raise significant revenues from taxes such as property tax paid by medical cannabis dispensaries. Denver alone raised \$3.4 million USD.

A study by McGill University of Montreal recently showed that the legalization of medical cannabis in several US states actually decreased use among adolescents by 0.53%.

## Feedback?

We'd love to hear from you about your thoughts on the newsletter. We've already had some excellent feedback to have the newsletter in colour and add some style. Email [communications@thecompassionclub.org](mailto:communications@thecompassionclub.org).



## Supplement Profile: Cleansing with Mediclear

Spring is almost here! With lots of new plant life sprouting up, it is a great time to cleanse the body from the overconsumption and hibernation that often accompanies the winter months.

A cleanse involves restricting foods that are hard for the body to digest or are potential allergens. A daily diet composed of lots of fruit, fresh fruit juices, raw and lightly steamed vegetables and brown rice is important to this kind of cleanse, with very few seasonings (a bit of olive oil and herbs can be used).

It is essential to avoid the high allergen foods such as soy, peanuts, eggs, wheat, and dairy. It is also necessary to avoid meat and meat products as these are harder for the digestive system to process. Lots of water and herbal teas should be consumed. This diet can be done for 3-14 days, depending on what feels right to you. It is important not to do any cleanse without the advice of a healthcare professional if you have recently recovered from an illness, surgery, or take regular medications (cleansing the body can change how you breakdown medications).

To aid in the detoxification process, and to add a little protein to the aforementioned diet, you can take Mediclear protein powder by Thorne. Mediclear is designed to help the body detoxify and includes vitamins, minerals and amino acids that help to do this in a base made up of rice protein. This powder can be added to juice and taken 2-3 times a day while on the cleanse. For the months of April and May our Mediclear will be 10% off the regular price.

## BCCCS AGM 2012

Greetings members. You are invited to attend the 13th annual general meeting on Sunday 6 May 2012. Join us for the board of directors election and updates on activities at the BCCCS over the past year. The AGM will be held at the BCCCS in the wait-room.

Biographies of the board of directors nominees will be available by 29 April at the Front Desk as well as online in the members' section of the website. Proxy forms will be available at Front Desk as well.

Be advised we cannot smoke cannabis on the premises.

Remember to arrive early and bring your membership card and identification to the meeting to speed up registration.

Please note that only members will be admitted to the meeting. If due to a physical limitation you are unable to participate without the assistance of a caregiver, the latter will be admitted to the meeting with you.

The AGM is operated by our consensus decision-making model. Only members who have been part of the club for three months or longer and have their membership fees paid and up-to-date will be able to fully engage in the process. However all members are encouraged to ask questions and participate in all the discussions.

Refreshments will be available on the day.

We look forward to seeing you all there!

DATE: SUNDAY 6 MAY 2012

REGISTER: 12PM - 1PM

MEETING: 1PM - 4PM

LOCATION: BCCOMPASSIONCLUBSOCIETY  
2995 COMMERCIAL DRIVE  
VANCOUVER BC  
COASTSALISHTERRITORIES

## Quest Food Program

For any of our members who need help with affordable healthy groceries, ask about the Quest program that we are partnering with.

Quest is a great supplement to the food bank, providing healthy, cheap groceries with which you can make full meals.

Ask at Front Desk or Wellness Center Front Desk about a no-cost Quest membership.