

**Medical Use of Marijuana
Policy Adopted by VMS Council April 13, 2002**

VMS believes that marijuana should be available for therapeutic use as a Schedule II drug only if there are properly controlled studies proving that it is efficacious. Carefully designed, controlled clinical trials of the effectiveness of marijuana, including inhaled marijuana, for medical uses should be encouraged. VMS believes that seriously ill patients should not be offered a therapy whose efficacy may be illusory and which in some cases may actually worsen the patient's medical condition. Therefore, VMS opposes the "medicalization" of marijuana unless and until there is objective proof that such use is scientifically justifiable.

VMS believes, however, that, in those limited cases where a physician concludes that there are no standard therapies available that will relieve the suffering of a seriously ill patient, and marijuana is the only treatment that can provide such relief, the physician should be able to recommend that treatment. VMS opposes governmental interference with physicians' ability to discuss or recommend any medical treatment in the context of an established physician-patient relationship, including the ability to discuss or recommend medicinal marijuana.

At the same time, because federal law with respect to physicians' liability for recommending marijuana to their patients is unsettled, physicians must make recommendations with caution to avoid potential liability under federal law for aiding or abetting a federal crime, or violation of the Controlled Substances Act.¹

**Cannabis Research
Resolution adopted by membership at annual meeting on October 26, 2002**

VMS supports research on the impact of cannabis on the medical conditions for which cannabis is used, provided that such data gathering would not put patients at risk for search and seizure.

¹ The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that there is no "medical necessity" exception to the prohibition in the Controlled Substances Act against distributing cannabis. A California federal district court issued an injunction prohibiting the government from revoking physicians' DEA licenses because they have recommended marijuana, but this ruling has been appealed to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.