

THE **NORML** NEWS

your National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws

US Appetite For Illicit Drugs Is World's Largest, UN Report Says

NORML Director Calls For A "Regime Change" In US Drug Policy

Vienna, Austria: The United States is the "world's single largest market" for illicit drugs, according to findings published this week in the United Nations 2004 Report of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB).

The report further states that "the rate of drug abuse in the US remains disturbingly high" despite federal and state governments spending approximately \$40 billion annually on illicit drug prevention efforts. NORML Executive Director Allen St. Pierre called the UN's findings an "indictment" of US criminal drug policy.

"The United States spends more money than any other nation to enforce its criminal drug policies, and incarcerates a greater number of its citizens than any other nation for anti-

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Company Accelerates Plans For US Approval Of Medi-Pot Spray

Salisbury, United Kingdom: British biotechnology firm GW Pharmaceuticals announced this week that it is accelerating plans to seek US regulatory approval for its oral spray Sativex, a whole plant medicinal cannabis extract containing precise doses of the cannabinoids THC and cannabidiol (CBD).

According to published reports by Reuters News Wire, the company has retained the services of the Apjohn Group, a 10-member organization consisting of former US pharmaceutical company executives specializing in US clinical drug development, regulatory affairs, and public policy. The company is also considering applying for an Investigational New Drug (IND) application from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

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Canada Offers Tax Break To Medical Cannabis Patients

Ottawa, Ontario: Canadians who buy cannabis for medicinal purposes will receive tax relief under the nation's 2005 proposed budget, introduced yesterday.

According to a review of the budget published by the Toronto Star, patients who purchase medical cannabis from Health Canada or a designated grower will now be eligible for Canada's 16 percent medical expense tax credit. Canada is believed to be the first nation to offer tax relief for medicinal cannabis users.

Under current law, qualified Canadian patients may legally possess and grow medicinal cannabis and/or purchase it from the government. Last year, Health Canada announced that it was also considering a pilot program to make government grown cannabis available in pharmacies. A similar federally run program has been in existence in the Netherlands since 2003.

The NORML Monthly Newsletter is an all-volunteer effort to broadcast news, announcements and information about and for the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws.

It is composed of the weekly NORML e-Zine available online at:
http://www.norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=3442

For content issues contact:

National NORML
1001 Connecticut Ave NW, #1010,
Washington, DC, 20009

(202) 483-5500
or visit their site at

www.norml.org

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A Voice for Responsible Marijuana Smokers

Since its founding in 1970, NORML has provided a voice in the public policy debate for those Americans who oppose marijuana prohibition and favor an end to the practice of arresting marijuana smokers. A nonprofit public-interest advocacy group, NORML represents the interests of the tens of millions of Americans who smoke marijuana responsibly.

During the 1970s, NORML led the successful efforts to decriminalize minor marijuana offenses in 11 states and significantly lower marijuana penalties in all others.

Today NORML continues to lead the fight to reform state and federal marijuana laws, whether by voter initiative or through the elected legislatures. NORML serves as an informational resource to the [national media](#) on marijuana-related stories, providing a perspective to offset the [anti-marijuana propaganda](#) from the government; lobbies state and federal legislators in support of reform legislation; publishes a regular [newsletter](#); hosts, along with the NORML Foundation, an informative web site and an [annual conference](#); and serves as the umbrella group for a national network of citizen-activists committed to ending marijuana prohibition and legalizing marijuana.

Their sister organization, [the NORML Foundation](#) sponsors public advertising campaigns to better educate the public about marijuana and alternatives to current marijuana policy; provides legal assistance and support to victims of the current laws; and undertakes relevant research.

The oldest and largest marijuana legalization organization in the country, NORML maintains a professional staff in Washington, DC, and a network of volunteer state and local [NORML Chapters](#) across the country. Check 'em out!

NORML's mission is to move public opinion sufficiently to achieve the repeal of marijuana prohibition so that the responsible use of cannabis by adults is no longer subject to penalty.

When marijuana is enjoyed responsibly, subjecting users to harsh criminal and civil penalties provides no public benefit and causes terrible injustices. For reasons of public safety, public health, economics and justice, the prohibition laws should be repealed to the extent that they criminalize responsible marijuana use.

NORML supports the right of adults to use marijuana responsibly, whether for [medical](#) or [personal](#) purposes. All penalties, both civil and criminal, should be eliminated for responsible use. NORML also supports the legalization of [hemp](#) (non-psychoactive marijuana) for industrial use. **To find out more, like how you can help, call, write or visit their website. You'll be glad you did!**

<continued from xxx, page 1 > drug offenses, yet it remains the world leader in illicit drug use and drug production," he said. "These disastrous results speak to the need for an immediate 'regime change' in US drug policy."

Regarding US cannabis production, the INCB report states that US law enforcement eradicated approximately 3.3 million cannabis plants in 2002 (excluding ditchweed), and that an estimated 2,500 tons of marijuana is grown in the United States annually.

"A more rational US drug policy would cease arresting and prosecuting the estimated 25 million Americans who use cannabis responsibly, and instead call for taxing and regulating the use of marijuana by adults in a manner similar to alcohol," St. Pierre said.

For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500. Full text of the 2004 INCB report is available online at:

<http://www.incb.org/e/ar/2004/menu.htm>

<continued from xxx, page 1 > In clinical trials, Sativex has been shown to reduce cancer pain and MS-associated spasticity, among other symptoms, in patients unresponsive to standard therapies.

Last December, Health Canada issued a "Qualifying Notice" for the approval of Sativex for the treatment of neuropathic pain associated with Multiple Sclerosis. However, British regulatory approval for the drug has been delayed after an advisory body of the British Medicines and Health products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) announced late last year that it required further clinical evidence of Sativex's ability to alleviate MS-associated spasticity in a "clinically relevant" manner.

For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre or Paul Armentano of NORML at (202) 483-5500 or visit: <http://www.gwpharm.com>

Australia: ACT Limits Cannabis Cultivation

Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: The number of marijuana plants that citizens may legally cultivate in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) will be reduced from five to two, under statewide legislative changes taking effect this weekend. The changes amend the ACT's Simple Cannabis Notice Scheme, which decriminalizes the use and possession of minor amounts of cannabis.

Other changes to the ACT's law include an increase in criminal penalties for the sale of commercial quantities of cannabis, as well as a ban on the cultivation of "hydroponically grown" marijuana.

Possession of up to 25 grams of cannabis and/or the cultivation of up to two marijuana plants will remain a non-criminal offense. In 2004, the ACT Legislative Assembly enacted new legislation allowing for farmers to commercially grow hemp for industrial purposes.

In recent years, several Australian territories - including Western Australia, the Northern Territory, South Australia, and Victoria - have adopted similar marijuana depenalization policies.

For more information, please contact either Allen St. Pierre or Paul Armentano at (202) 483-5500.

NORML Releases Most Comprehensive Analysis Of US Marijuana Arrest Data To Date

Washington, DC: US marijuana policies, which rely primarily on criminal penalties and law enforcement, are wholly ineffective at controlling the use and sale of marijuana, concludes a comprehensive report issued today by the NORML Foundation. The report, entitled "Crimes of Indiscretion: Marijuana Arrests in the United States," includes a detailed examination of the fiscal costs associated with

<continued from previous page> the enforcement of marijuana laws at the state and county level, as well as a complete demographic analysis of which Americans are most likely to be arrested for violating marijuana laws.

Among the reports' findings:

* The enforcement of state and local marijuana laws annually costs US taxpayers an estimated \$7.6 billion, approximately \$10,400 per arrest. Of this total, annual police costs are \$3.7 billion, judicial/legal costs are \$853 million, and correctional costs are \$3.1 billion. In both California and New York, state fiscal costs dedicated to marijuana law enforcement annually total over \$1 billion.

* Marijuana possession and sales arrests disproportionately impact black adults. African Americans are among the demographic groups most adversely impacted by marijuana law enforcement. While adult African Americans account for only 8.8% of the US population and 11.9% of annual marijuana users, they comprise 23% of all marijuana possession arrests in the United States.

* Marijuana possession and sales arrests disproportionately impact younger Americans. One out of every four marijuana possession arrests in the United States involves a person age 18 or younger. Seventy-four percent of all US marijuana possession arrests are for people under the age of 30. Marijuana users who are white, over 30 years old, and/or female are disproportionately unaffected by marijuana possession arrests.

* Over one million US teenagers sell marijuana. The enforcement of state and local marijuana laws has neither reduced adolescent demand for marijuana, nor has it reduced the number of teens supplying marijuana to other adolescents on the black market.

* Marijuana prohibition fails to produce intended results. Total US marijuana arrests increased 165% during the 1990s, from 287,850 in 1991 to 755,000 in 2003. However, these increased arrest rates have not been associated with a reduction in marijuana use,

reduced marijuana availability, a reduction in the number of new marijuana users, reduced treatment admissions, reduced emergency room mentions of marijuana, any reduction in marijuana potency, or any increases in the price of marijuana.

NORML Executive Director Allen St. Pierre called the report an official "indictment" of US marijuana policy, noting that present US marijuana strategies resoundingly fail when measured against the federal government's handpicked drug use and public health indicators.

"Public policies are measured by their ability to produce intended results," St. Pierre said. "The stated goal of criminal marijuana prohibition is to deter marijuana use and promote public health. As the data show, the current prohibition-oriented policy clearly does neither. Rather, the enforcement of state and local marijuana laws unnecessarily costs American taxpayers billions of dollars annually, disproportionately impacts the lives of young people and African Americans, and encourages approximately one million teenagers to become entrepreneurs in the criminal drug trade."

The report and analysis lists states and counties by rank for categories such as for marijuana possession and sales arrests; and total arrests versus per capita arrest rates. For example:

Top five states for all marijuana arrests:

- 1) California (60,111 marijuana arrests)
- 2) New York (57,504 marijuana arrests)
- 3) Texas (51,563 marijuana arrests)
- 4) Illinois (41,447 marijuana arrests)
- 5) Georgia (23,977 marijuana arrests)

Top five states for marijuana arrests per capita (National Average = 239 marijuana arrests/per 100,000 citizens):

- 1) Nebraska (458 marijuana arrests per 100,000)
- 2) Louisiana (398 marijuana arrests per 100,000)
- 3) Wyoming (386 marijuana arrests per 100,000)
- 4) Kentucky (364 marijuana arrests per 100,000)
- 5) Illinois (359 marijuana arrests per 100,000)

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This report is available online from the NORML website:

* Crimes of Indiscretion: Marijuana Arrests in the United States
http://www.norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=6411

* Introduction
http://www.norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=6421

* Table of Content
http://www.norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=6412

* List of Tables and Figures
http://www.norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=6420

* State-by-State | County-by-County Arrest Data
http://www.norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=6427

* Create Your Own State-Based Reports and National Rankings
http://www.norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=6428

Funding for the report was made possible by a generous grant from The Threshold Foundation.

For more information or to schedule a media interview with Allen St. Pierre or NORML/NORML Foundation Senior Policy Analyst Paul Armentano, please call (202) 483-5500 or send an e-mail request to: media@norml.org

"Get Up, Stand Up! Stand Up For Your Rights!"

Join NORML This March 31-April 2 For The 2005 National Conference Washington, DC: NORML will hold its 2005 National Conference next week, beginning Thursday, March 31, at the Cathedral Hill Hotel in San Francisco.

This year's conference will offer attendees a unique opportunity to learn about marijuana legal reform and network with activists from across the nation in America's most hemp-friendly city.

This year's NORML Conference will feature panel discussions and speakers on a variety of issues.

Panels include: "Marijuana and Good Health: Who Knew?" "Drugged Driving Tests: The Science and Policies That You Need to Know-Right Now," "Cannabis Prohibition and Censorship," "Vaporizers & FDA Research: The Future of 'Smoking' Cannabis," "Police Tactics: Don't Become a Statistic," as well a special High Times Magazine presentation, "High Times' History of The 'Bud' Shot: A Pictorial and Cultural Anthology."

Featured speakers at the conference include Rick Steves, best-selling travel author, TV show host and NORML Advisory Board member; Allen St. Pierre, NORML's new Executive Director; Marsha Rosenbaum, Director of the Safety First Project and the Drug Policy Alliance, San Francisco; Philippe Lucas, Director of Canadians for Safe Access and the Vancouver Island Compassion Society (VICS); Valerie Leveroni Corral, Director of the Wo/Men's Alliance for Medical Marijuana (WAMM) and NORML board member; Angel Raich and Diane Monson, respondents in the US Supreme Court medical marijuana challenge Raich v. Ashcroft; and Ethan Nadelmann, Executive Director of the Drug Policy Alliance.

Other scheduled events include a silent art auction, a joint reception sponsored by NORML and High Times, and NORML's annual Saturday night "4:20" benefit party. Pro-rated day passes will be available at the door.

NORML Executive Director Allen St. Pierre invited all concerned citizens and media to attend this year's conference. "If a person is serious about changing America's misguided cannabis laws, the annual NORML conference is the gathering place for medical cannabis patients, cannabis consumers and anyone interested in learning about the science and culture of cannabis."

Complete conference information, including conference agenda, registration and hotel information, is available online at: http://www.norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=6440.

Lodging at the Cathedral Hill Hotel for conference attendees is available at a specially reduced rate by calling 1-800-622-0855 or by visiting www.cathedralhillhotel.com and referring to the code 'NORML'.

Drug Czar's Office To Fund Nationwide Tour To Push For Expanded Student Drug Testing

Washington, DC: The White House will sponsor regional summits this spring to encourage middle and high-school officials to enact random, student drug testing in public schools. The taxpayer-funded summits will take place in Dallas, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, and Portland. The announcement of the summits comes just weeks after the White Houses' 2005 "National Drug Control Strategy" proposed increasing federal funding for student drug testing by more than 150 percent to a record \$25.4 million annually.

NORML Director Allen St. Pierre criticized the White Houses' push for the expanded use of suspicionless, student drug testing.

"Random drug testing of students is a humiliating, invasive practice that runs contrary to the principles of due process," St. Pierre said. "It compels teens to submit evidence against themselves and forfeit their privacy rights as a necessary requirement for attending school. Rather than presuming our school children innocent of illicit activity, suspicionless drug testing presumes them guilty until they prove themselves innocent. Is this truly the message the Bush administration wishes to send America's young people?"

St. Pierre added that the only federally commissioned review examining the effectiveness of student drug testing programs found the policy to have no discernible impact on youth drug use. The 2003 study of 76,000 students by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research, concluded, "At each grade level - 8, 10, and 12 - the investigators found virtually identical rates of drug use" in schools that drug tested versus those that did not.

Most recently, a 2005 study by the British Joseph Roundtree Foundation concluded, "Very few independent and rigorous evaluations have been conducted to identify the impact of drug testing programs in school." Among those studies that have taken place, "The evidence that programs lead to a reduction in use is far from conclusive."

For more information, please contact either Allen St. Pierre or Paul Armentano of NORML at (202) 483-5500. Summit registration and sign up information is available online at: <http://www.cmpinc.net/dts/>

Cannabis Extracts Efficacious For Patients With Urinary Dysfunction

Tallahassee, FL: Whole plant medicinal cannabis extracts relieve urinary dysfunction in patients suffering from advanced Multiple Sclerosis, according to clinical trial data published in the April issue of The Journal of Urology.

Fifteen patients participated in the trial. Volunteers were administered extracts containing precise doses of the cannabinoids THC and CBD via and oral spray for eight weeks, followed by the administration of THC only extracts. "Urinary urgency, the number and volume of incontinence episodes, frequency and nocturia (excessive urination at night) all decreased significantly following treatment," authors wrote. "Cannabis-based medical extracts are a safe and effective treatment for urinary and other problems in patients with advanced MS," the study concluded.

Previous studies in the United Kingdom of patients suffering from advanced stages of MS have noted similar results. Last December, Health Canada issued a "Qualifying Notice" for the approval of the cannabis extract spray Sativex for the treatment of neuropathic pain associated with Multiple Sclerosis. Regulatory approval for the drug in Britain also remains pending.

For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Senior Policy Analyst, at (202) 483-5500. Full text of the study, entitled "An Open-Label Pilot Study of Cannabis-Based Extracts for Bladder Dysfunction in Advanced Multiple Sclerosis," appears in the April issue of The Journal of Urology.

EU To Begin Roadside Saliva Testing For Drugged Drivers

Brussels, Belgium: Law enforcement in the United Kingdom, Ireland, and throughout Europe will participate in a pilot study regarding the use of roadside oral fluid screening devices to detect for the presence of controlled substances, according to a press release from the European Police Traffic Network, TISPOL.

Under the guidelines of the year-long project, known as ESTHER (practical Evaluation of oral fluid Screening devices by TISPOL members to Harmonize European police Requirements), authorities will administer various types of saliva

<continued from previous page> drug tests to motorists to screen for illicit substances.

Unlike urinalysis, which detects metabolites indicative of past drug use, saliva testing screens for the presence of 'parent drugs' (the identifiable psychoactive compound of a controlled substance). While certain drug metabolites are detectable in the urine for days and sometimes weeks after past use, parent drugs are only detectable in the saliva for several hours. To date, however, roadside oral fluid testing has only been implemented in Victoria, Australia, where critics of the technology have charged that the test is often inaccurate.

The goal of the EU study will be to outline a standardized procedure for roadside drug tests, not to assess the reliability or accuracy of oral fluid devices, TISPOL said.

For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Senior Policy Analyst, at (202) 483-5500.

British Docs Recommending Medical Cannabis, Study Says

Salisbury, United Kingdom: One out of six Britons who use medicinal cannabis do so at the advice of their physician, according to survey data published this month in the International Journal of Clinical Practice.

Sixteen percent of respondents said that they use medical cannabis at the suggestion of their physician, while 62 percent responded that a friend or family member had recommended it. Approximately 950 Britons responded to the questionnaire, which authors called "the most extensive survey of medicinal cannabis use among chronically ill patients" ever conducted.

Respondents were most likely to report using cannabis to treat symptoms of chronic pain, Multiple Sclerosis, or neuropathy. Ninety-five percent of patients said they had obtained some therapeutic benefit from cannabis, with just under half reporting that it provided greater relief than their prescribed medications. Nearly 80 percent of respondents said that their symptoms returned or became worse when they ceased using cannabis therapeutically.

"The results of our UK survey, including the extent of use and reported effects, lend support to the further development of safe and effective medicines based on cannabis," said the study's lead author, Mark Ware of the McGill University Health Centre in

Montreal, Canada. "[T]hese data ... point to the need for clinical studies of cannabis and cannabinoids with standardized and quality-controlled products."

For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Senior Policy Analyst, at (202) 483-5500. Full text of the study, "The medicinal use of cannabis in the UK: results of a nationwide survey," appears in the March issue of the International Journal of Clinical Practice.

Netherlands: Most Use Prescription Cannabis For MS, Study Says

Cologne, Germany: Nearly four out of ten patients in the Netherlands with a prescription for "medical-grade cannabis" (cannabis provided by Dutch pharmacies with a standardized THC content of 10.2 percent) use it to treat neurologic disorders such as Multiple Sclerosis and spinal cord injuries, according to survey data published in the current issue of the journal Neurology.

More than 100 patients with a physician's prescription to use medicinal cannabis responded to the questionnaire. Overall, 39 percent of respondents said they used "medical-grade cannabis" to treat neurologic disorders. Twenty-one percent said they used cannabis to treat symptoms related to musculoskeletal/connective tissue disorders (such as fibromyalgia, arthritis, or migraine), and 14 percent said they used it to treat symptoms of cancer and/or HIV/AIDS.

Sixty-four percent of respondents reported "good or excellent" therapeutic effects from cannabis, with a greater percentage of patients experiencing perceived benefits the longer they used cannabis. Perceived efficacy was better among patients who inhaled cannabis versus those who took cannabis orally, authors found.

Since 2003, Dutch patients with a doctor's prescription have been able to purchase government-grown cannabis at licensed pharmacies. An estimated 1,000 to 1,500 patients are believed to receive prescription cannabis from Dutch pharmacies.

For more information, please contact either Allen St. Pierre or Paul Armentano of NORML at (202) 483-5500. Full text of the study, "Medical use of cannabis in the Netherlands," appears in the March issue of Neurology.



THE NORML NEWS



From your National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws

NORML Announces Willie Nelson Benefit Golf Tournament Play Golf With Willie; All Proceeds Benefit NORML

Austin, Texas: Celebrate this July 4th weekend in style with NORML and country music legend Willie Nelson at the inaugural Willie Nelson/NORML Benefit Golf Tournament.

Join Advisory Board member Willie Nelson and the NORML staff this July 3, 2005, for 18 holes of golf and festivities at Willie's personal golf course, the Pedernales Golf Club in Spicewood, Texas, just outside of Austin.

Guests can play golf or enjoy a relaxing day in the VIP tent. Or, for a premium donation, guests can play golf side-by-side with longtime NORML supporter Willie Nelson in Willie's exclusive 'sixsome.'

Reserve your place for this special event.

The tournament will consist of 9 holes in the morning, with another 9 holes in the afternoon. Under Willie rules, we will play with 6 people in each foursome, which means they have a total of 54 slots available. The registration fee for the 18 holes is \$200, which goes to NORML. This will include the use of a golf cart, with lunch and refreshments provided throughout the day at the VIP tent

That evening Willie is playing a concert with Bob Dylan in Austin, and they have reserved 50 tickets for those who wish to catch this extraordinary show. Those tickets will also be \$100 each.



For those of you who may not play golf, but who might enjoy hanging out with Willie and all of them NORML folks, they will also be selling VIP tickets at \$100 each. These tickets will provide access to the VIP tent at the golf course, lunch, refreshments, etc

Please let them know if this is something for which you would like to register. or wish to reserve a spot for this very special event.

For more information, or to sign up to be a part of this unique NORML benefit, please visit:

http://www.norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=6446
or contact Keith Stroup at (202) 483-5500
-or- keith@norml.org

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