

Nurses Are Sharply Critical of Federal Substance Abuse Agency

ALBANY, N.Y., July 8, 2020 (Newswire.com) - "A federal health agency charged with overseeing America's mental health has become the latest enforcer of the failed federal cannabis prohibition." So says Eloise Theisen, President of the American Cannabis Nurses Association (ACNA) in response to reports that the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has instituted a new policy that will bar individuals and organizations from receiving grants that may be used directly or indirectly to provide for cannabis treatment.



The prohibiting language is buried deep in an 84-page report from SAMHSA announcing grants for Fiscal Year 2020 state education agencies. It came to light recently in Maine, where Maine's Education Department announced it is no longer eligible for millions of dollars in grants from SAMHSA because of Maine's law allowing the medical use of cannabis by students residing in Maine.

It is estimated that Maine may lose as much as \$3.3 million in funding.

"Having failed to quash medical cannabis via their ridiculous Schedule I classification," Theisen said, "the federal government is now perniciously going after some of the weakest members of our society." Maine is legally bound by its state law to provide medical cannabis to anyone with certification from a physician. This includes some mental health patients and patients with opioid use disorder.

"At a time when all of our resources should be focused to help those with opioid addictions, SAMHSA is seeking to eliminate one medication — cannabis— that has been shown to be remarkably effective in combating addiction," Theisen continued. "Federal policy towards cannabis continues to be draconian in its actions and ignorant in terms of scientific findings with regard to cannabis. Most worrying is the complete disregard of the will of the people."

ACNA's Immediate Past-President, Dr. Carey S. Clark, is a Maine resident and she stated, "It is a shame that Maine's youngsters will suffer from this lack of funding, all because the State of Maine views access to medical cannabis for young people with medical conditions as an essential right. The cannabis prohibition issues at the federal level trickle down to states in ways that continue to impact

vulnerable populations, and these unfair and unjust acts must end.”

Maine is one of 33 states, plus the District of Columbia that recognizes medical uses of cannabis. Despite the overwhelming embrace of medical cannabis by the individual states, the federal government, most notably the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), continues to classify cannabis as a drug “with no accepted medical use in treatment”. The prohibition of cannabis at the federal level continues to interfere with the health care provider-patient relationship when a doctor or nurse practitioner determines that a patient’s condition could be treated with medical cannabis.

The ACNA is a non-profit association with more than 1400 members nation-wide. Their mission is to advance excellence in cannabis nursing practice through advocacy, collaboration, education, research, and policy development.

Source: American Cannabis Nurses Association

Additional Links

- <https://cannabisnurses.org> - American Cannabis Nurses Association Website

About American Cannabis Nurses Association

The American Cannabis Nurses Association (ACNA) is a national organization dedicated to expanding the knowledge base of endo-cannabinoid therapeutics among nurses.

<http://www.cannabisnurses.org>

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