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HHS NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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STATEMENT OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES REGARDING INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE REPORT ON POSSIBLE MEDICAL USES OF MARIJUANA OR ITS COMPONENTS

The Institute of Medicine report, commissioned by the Office of National Drug Control Policy, supports the need for evidence-based research into the effects of using marijuana, and more particularly the cannabinoids which are components of marijuana, for treating the symptoms of specific health conditions or diseases.

Much of this report echoes the conclusions of the panel of experts convened by the National Institutes of Health in February 1997 to assess what is known about the possible medical utility of marijuana and the cannabinoids.

In addition to noting the need for more evidence-based research, the IOM panel has especially emphasized that smoked marijuana is a crude drug delivery system that delivers a significant number of harmful substances. IOM points to the possible promise of alternative delivery systems that might provide safer and more reliable delivery for purer forms of cannabinoid drugs that may be proven by research to be effective for some conditions.

The Department of Health and Human Services continues to believe that evidence-based research is needed to determine whether there are possible specific treatment benefits that may be derived from some of the components of marijuana. NIH will continue to consider any grant applications it receives on the medical utility of marijuana and its constituents, and is prepared to fund those applications that meet the accepted standards of scientific design and are found, on the basis of peer review, to be competitive with other applications that qualify for funding.

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ISSUES - Medical
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