

# State health official says medical pot controls inadequate

## Current regulations won't keep marijuana out of black market

By **PARIS ACHEN**  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — A deputy director with the Oregon Health Authority has warned state lawmakers that existing controls over the state's medical marijuana industry might be insufficient to keep the drug out of the illicit market.

Priscilla Lewis, deputy director for the Public Health Division, stopped short of asking lawmakers to institute a seed-to-sale tracking system for medical cannabis. That system involves labeling every plant and tracking it with a tiny computer chip similar to those used to find lost pets.

"We are not asking for that, but we see the wisdom

in that," Lewis said Tuesday. "It is very challenging without it, there are opportunities for dirty product to come back into the system and also for diversion."

### State can track recreational pot

The Oregon Liquor Control Commission already has authority to track recreational marijuana with a seed-to-sale system. The commission inked a \$1.7 million contract in September with Franwell to provide the tracking system. Franwell also is the contractor for Colorado's marijuana tracking system.

Lawmakers opted for a looser tracking system for

medical marijuana involving growers largely self-reporting the number of plants they're cultivating.

"Obviously, seed-to-sale is kind of the gold standard for keeping the system closed, so any time you have a weaker regulatory structure, the potential is higher" for leakage into the illicit market, said state Senate Majority Leader Ginny Burdick, D-Portland, who sits on the joint legislative marijuana legalization committee.

"This was basically a political compromise because the medical program is almost 20 years old now, so there was a lot of concern from growers about being subject to OLCC," Burdick said.

Naysayers of seed-to-sale have said stringent tracking and other onerous regulation would hurt low-income patients' access to medical can-

nabis by making the product more expensive.

A temporary sales program that started Oct. 1 allows medical dispensaries to sell recreational pot until Dec. 31, 2016. Starting in 2017, dispensaries that sell medical marijuana may no longer sell recreational pot.

### Some momentum for change

There is some momentum to change the law to continue allowing medical and recreational marijuana to be sold out of the same location, Burdick said. If that were to happen, there may be interest in requiring that medical marijuana undergo the same scrutiny and tracking as recreational, the senator said.

"As we went down the road, I think more people got comfortable with more track-

ing as long as they could sell both recreationally and medically," Burdick said.

Lawmakers on the joint legislative committee on marijuana legalization are considering a housekeeping bill on marijuana legalization next year. It's unclear yet whether that could include provisions to allow all medical and recreational sales from one location and more stringent requirements for tracking medical marijuana. Doing one without the other is unlikely to gain political traction, Burdick said.

Rob Patridge, chairman of the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, has estimated up to 75 percent of cannabis grown under the medical program leaks into the illegal market. That estimate was based on his conversations with unnamed growers, said a commission spokesman.

### Still illegal under federal law

Possession, manufacture and delivery of medical and recreational cannabis remain illegal at the federal level. The U.S. Department of Justice in a 2013 memo indicated that states that have passed laws to legalize marijuana must implement "strong and effective regulatory and enforcement systems that will address the threat those state laws could pose to public safety, public health and other law enforcement interests."

"A system adequate to that task must not only control robust controls and procedures on paper, it must also be effective in practice," the memo said.

The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.

# Resignation opens position on Astoria School Board

By **EDWARD STRATTON**  
The Daily Astorian

Martin Dursse, who has served on the Astoria School Board since 2008 and was a former board chairman, has stepped down.

"My other commitments have become too great for me to be able to fulfill the requirements of my position on the board, and I feel it is best for me to make room for someone with the time and energy to devote to the job," Dursse said in a letter to Superintendent Craig Hoppes.

The school board accepted the resignation at a meeting Wednesday. The three board members present — Jeanette Sampson, Jenna Rickenbach and Grace Laman — thanked Dursse for providing steady leadership on the school board and for helping them acclimate when they joined the governing body.

Dursse, an operations manager for the Columbia River Bar Pilots and a 22-year U.S. Coast Guard veteran, was appointed to the school board in 2008 to fill a position vacated by Astoria forester David Kaspar. Dursse ran unopposed for election in 2011 and reelection in May.

"I'm excited for him, because I know he's doing so many great things in the community already," said Sampson, who took over as board chairwoman Tuesday and held back tears while speaking about him.

Sampson slammed the gavel down at the end of the board's meeting in honor of Dursse.

During the Pledge of Allegiance at the beginning of the meeting, Astoria High School Principal Lynn Jackson provided a subtle nod to Dursse, whose voice often stood out during the recital

as he omitted the comma — or pause — used by many in the middle of the phrase "one nation under God." The "under God" portion was added on Flag Day in 1954. There is no comma in the complete phrase, although recitals of the pledge often include one.

Board vacancies are filled by appointment. Eligible appointees must be registered voters and a resident within the school district for at least one year preceding their appointment. School board elections are held in odd years, and Hoppes said the board has the option of keeping the position vacant until the next election in May 2017.

But board members leaned toward appointing a replacement before then. Hoppes recommended notifying the public of the vacancy, asking for applications by late January and interviewing candidates later that month. The appointee would start in February and run for election in May 2017.

# Scholarships available for community college students

The Daily Astorian

The application period for the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation's Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship is open.

The scholarship is the largest private fund for high-achieving community college students from low-income backgrounds who want to transfer to a four-year institution. Cooke Scholars can receive up to \$40,000 per year for up to three years of study at any four-year accredited college or university. Approximately 85 recipients will be selected for the coming year.

In addition to financial support, the program helps students make the transition to four-year colleges and maximize their campus experiences with the support of counselors, a network of nearly 2,000 scholars

and alumni. Cooke Scholars also have additional opportunities such as internships, study abroad and continued funding for graduate school.

To be eligible, applicants must be current students at accredited U.S. community colleges or two-year institutions with sophomore status or have graduated within the last five years. They must have a cumulative college GPA of 3.5 or above, plan to transfer to a four-year college or university to begin studies in fall 2016, and

demonstrate unmet financial need.

A distinguished panel of university faculty and admissions professionals grade applicants on academic ability and achievements, financial need, persistence, leadership and a desire to help others.

Applications must be received by 9 a.m. Dec. 15. Finalists will be notified in April 2016. To learn more about the Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship, visit <http://tinyurl.com/ol22svd>



Martin Dursse

# Tampering charges filed after drug bust

The Daily Astorian

Astoria Police filed additional charges against one of the three people arrested Wednesday at an Astoria apartment where methamphetamine was found.

Jessica Gassner, 37, of Astoria, is being charged with tampering with evidence and

hindering prosecution. She was originally arrested for possession and distribution of methamphetamine

after police served a search warrant at the apartment on 1824 Exchange St.

During the search, Gassner's phone and tablet were seized. When detec-

tives went to forensically examine the phone, police said, they found Gassner had remotely wiped the phone. As soon as police turned on the phone, it reformatted itself.

Along with Gassner, Blaine Ogier was arrested and charged with distribution of a controlled substance — methamphetamine. Krystal Wilson was arrested on a warrant from Seaside Municipal Court.

Officers found methamphetamine and items that had been traded for methamphetamine in the apartment.



Jessica Gassner

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