



**Do you live or work
in Washington
County?**

We're here for you!!

The Washington County Health Department offers daily HIV testing and counseling, by appointment and walk-in, in two convenient locations:

155 North 1st Hillsboro **12550 SW 2nd Beaverton**

Other services include STD exams and treatment and a Wellness Program for individuals who are HIV positive. Call 648-8851 for an appointment



Gai-Pied
(GAY PEE-Ä)

Unique selection of gay books, magazines, calendars & cards
For the Gay Man in Your Life
Popular movie rental/sales • Novelty Items
331-1125 • 2544 NE Broadway
Portland, OR 97232



Monthly Support Groups
For Parents, Youth & Children
(Meets second Monday of month)

The Parent Teacher Panel
Dialogue for Educators

Opening Hearts & Minds
Speaker Empowerment Workshops

"Love Makes a Family"
Weekly Talk Radio Program
KKEY 1150 AM • 7-9 a.m. Wed.

**A Public Voice for
Lesbian and Gay Families**

503/228-3892
Fax: 503/228-3970

PO Box 11694
Portland, OR 97211

national news

Blowing smoke

Inhaling deeply, the Clinton administration has vowed to take action against the medical use of marijuana

by Bob Roehr

The Clinton administration turned the rhetorical screws in its war against the medical use of marijuana at a Dec. 30 news conference in Washington, D.C. The move is a response to voter-approved initiatives in California and Arizona that allow medical use of marijuana and other banned drugs.

"Drug czar" retired Army Gen. Barry McCaffrey, Attorney General Janet Reno and Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala threatened a series of reprisals against patients who use marijuana for medicinal purposes and physicians who recommend that use. They warned that doctors could lose the right to write prescriptions, patients could be excluded from Medicare and Medicaid, and federal assistance could be given to state and local governments prosecuting medical marijuana cases.

But at the same time Reno admitted the administration is not going to commit any new resources to this effort. It has also decided not to directly challenge the laws in court, and it will defer to Congress on whether or not the states should lose federal funding for drug rehabilitation.

"This two-bit general has declared war on people with AIDS," charged Steve Michael of ACT UP-Washington. "It's outrageous that the president who 'didn't inhale' is denying sick and dying people the relief that medical marijuana provides."

Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) has proposed federal legislation to legalize medical use of marijuana. In a statement released by his office, he said that "medical practitioners who are following the dictates of their profession and the laws adopted by the voters of their states by prescribing the method they think best suited to reduce suffering in seriously ill people do not deserve to be persecuted by the federal government."

Ben Schatz, executive director of the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association, said, "This strikes me as an absurd political ploy to make the administration look tough on drugs. It is destructive and not medically justified."

"We have members who are quite concerned about prosecution, about medical McCarthy hearings," he said. "It's hard to dismiss those fears as groundless."

Dr. Jeffrey Singer, a Phoenix, Ariz., surgeon who was a leader in that state's referendum, reacted harshly to the news: "If they're going to take away a doctor's license because he rendered his opinion on paper, that's a First Amendment issue."

McCaffrey maintained on CBS' *This Morning* that the administration is "trying to protect the

scientific medical process by which we approve medicines." He claimed there was little data to support the efficacy of medical use of marijuana.

What he didn't mention are the roadblocks his agency has thrown into that research process.

Dr. Lester Grinspoon, professor at the Harvard Medical School, pointed out on PBS' *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer* that there are a number of studies both here and in Europe that have demonstrated the effectiveness of marijuana for certain medical purposes.

The limited amount of data available on all natural products, including marijuana, is a result

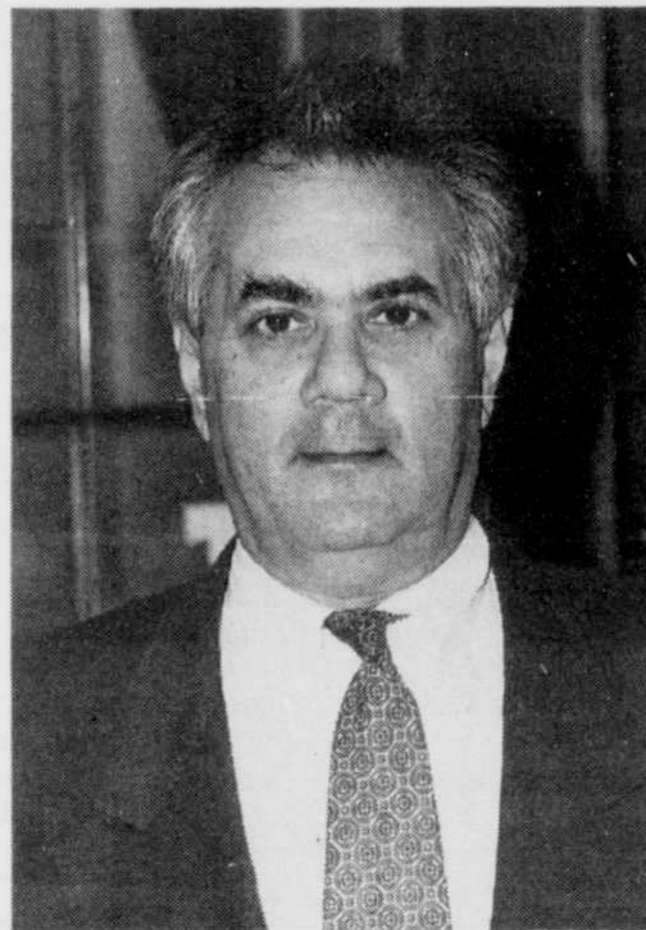
of the way clinical trials and drug approval are structured in the United States. Most research is conducted by pharmaceutical companies, which can license a drug and later make money off of its sales. Natural products, however, cannot be licensed, so there is no financial incentive for industry to study them.

The American Medical Association has urged federal funding of research to determine the validity of marijuana as an effective medical treatment.

Dr. Donald Abrams, a physician and researcher in San Francisco, is particularly frustrated with the Clinton administration.

In 1993 he proposed a clinical trial of medical marijuana for treating AIDS-associated wasting syndrome. The Food and Drug Administration eagerly worked with him to shape the trial, and it went through normal review processes within the University of California research system. All approved its structure.

He applied to the Drug Enforcement Agency in April 1995 for permission to import the neces-



Barney Frank

sary marijuana from a legal grower in Holland. Ever since then the DEA has raised one procedural objection after another to prevent several modified versions of the trial from going forward.

"One of the things that was particularly annoying," said GLMA's Schatz, "was when Shalala, et al., were citing studies that proportionately show that marijuana is not medically helpful, while at the same time they are blocking further study."

Schatz, a member of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, compared the response to the way the administration has dealt with needle-exchange programs to reduce the spread of HIV: "There are a lot more studies on needle exchange, documenting its benefits, and in that case the administration feels the need to be extremely cautious. But when it comes to marijuana, they are willing to misuse a handful of studies to push their political agenda."

The limited amount of data available on all natural products, including marijuana, is a result of the way clinical trials and drug approval are structured in the United States.



**TRAVEL AGENTS
INTERNATIONAL®**

OR Reg. #221

CORPORATE
LEISURE
DOMESTIC
INTERNATIONAL

"Serving Our Community by Meeting Your Needs"

- Designated Agency for Team Oregon Gay Games IV & V
- HIV Community Support Program through donated Bonus Dollars

**GAY GAMES V
Amsterdam!
TRAVEL SEMINAR**

Sunday, January 19
2:30 P.M. - 5:30 P.M.

Northwest Service Center Boardroom
1819 NW Everett

Seating limited to 60 people
Reserve your place today!

(Gay Games V to be held in Amsterdam August 1-8, 1998)

Need to reach your travel agent during non-business hours?
You can reach us 24 Hours a day, 7 days a week!
Call 503•223•1100 or 800•357•3194

917 SW Washington • Portland, Oregon