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Iowa Board of Pharmacy to Discuss Next Steps Regarding Medical Marijuana on November 2nd

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On the Iowa Board of Pharmacy's agenda for November 2 is an endorsement of California's Proposition 19 (legalizing marijuana in California) by former U.S. Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders. Also on the agenda is the Quad Cities Metropolitan Enforcement Group (MEG), which worries that Iowa will become like California. The Iowa Board of Pharmacy must decide what to do.

Clearly, the misclassification of marijuana in the most restrictive category of the state and federal controlled substances acts has led to this dramatic divide between medical professionals and law enforcement officials. We now have medical professionals advocating for complete legalization of marijuana and law enforcement officers giving us medical advice.

Iowans for Medical Marijuana have a plan. We have filed another petition with the Iowa Board of Pharmacy which is also on the board's agenda for November 2. Our petition asks the Iowa Board of Pharmacy to use its current authority to reclassify marijuana in Iowa as a substance with medical utility. Marijuana is currently misclassified in Iowa as having no accepted medical use in the United States while at the same time 14 states have accepted its medical use over the past 14 years.

For most of American history, growing and using marijuana was legal under both federal law and the laws of the individual states. By the 1840s, marijuana's therapeutic potential began to be recognized by some U.S. physicians. From 1850 to 1941 cannabis was included in the United States Pharmacopoeia as a recognized medicinal. By the end of 1936, however, all 48 states had enacted laws to regulate marijuana. Its decline in medicine was hastened by the development of aspirin, morphine, and then other opium-derived drugs, all of which helped to replace marijuana in the treatment of pain and other medical conditions in Western medicine.

Medical Marijuana: Review and Analysis of Federal and State Policies, Report No. RL33211, April 2, 2010, ***Congressional Research Service*** (www.crs.gov), at page 1.