

Fw: Personal note

diana lejins

to:

Suja Lowenthal, Patrick O'Donnell, Gerrie Schipske, Dee Andrews, James Johnson, Rae Gabelich, Steve Neal, Gary DeLong, Bob Foster, Robert Garcia

01/14/2012 11:19 AM

Cc:

Diana Lejins, Nancy Muth

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1-17-12

UB-25

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Dear Council Members and Mayor

Hope I haven't overwhelmed you with info, but this is such an important situation for people with disabilities.

And, as you know I advocate for those in society who often cannot speak for themselves.

I truly hope that you will at least glance over the materials I sent before this Tuesday's Council meeting. Please remember that by banning the dispensaries you may be creating more suffering for some and even condemning some to an untimely death.

One day, maybe you or one of your loved ones will be gravely affected by this decision.

Take care and peace be with you.....

Working to make the World a better place,

diana



RAND Study shows less crime with medpot clinics.....

1-17-10

UB-25

diana lejins

to:

Jim McDonnell, Suja Lowenthal, Patrick ODonnell, Gerrie Schipske, Dee Andrews, James Johnson, Rae Gabelich, Steve Neal, Gary DeLong, Bob Foster, Robert Garcia

01/13/2012 04:29 PM

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Diana Lejins, Nancy Muth

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Study On Pot Shops Has A Twist

Rand finds less crime, not more, near L.A. dispensaries. Sheriff, city attorney's office dispute conclusions.

September 21, 2011|John Hoeffel

Medical marijuana dispensaries -- with storerooms of high-priced weed, registers brimming with cash and some clientele more interested in getting high than getting well -- are often seen as magnets for crime, a perception deepened by a few high-profile murders.

But a report from the Rand Corp. reaches a startling conclusion: The opposite appears to be true.

In a study of crime near Los Angeles dispensaries -- which the investigators call the most rigorous independent examination of its kind -- the Santa Monica-based think tank found that crime actually increased near hundreds of pot shops after they were required to close last summer.

For The Record

Los Angeles Times Thursday, September 22, 2011 Home Edition Main News Part A Page 4 News Desk 1 inches; 49 words Type of Material: Correction

Marijuana dispensaries: In the Sept. 21 LATExtra section, the headline on an article about a study of crime near marijuana dispensaries said that less crime was found near L.A. dispensaries. In fact, the study found that after hundreds of dispensaries were required to close last summer, crime increased nearby.

"What I would take away from it is maybe there should just be a little bit less fear about having dispensaries," said Mireille Jacobson, a health economist who was the lead researcher. "Hopefully, this injects a little bit of science into the discussion."

The researchers compared the 10 days before the city's medical marijuana ordinance took effect June 7, 2010, with the 10 days after, when many of the more than 400 illegal dispensaries shut down -- if only briefly.

They found a 59% increase in crime within three-tenths of a mile of a closed dispensary compared to an open one and a 24% increase within six-tenths of a mile.

The city attorney's office, which has argued in court proceedings that the number of dispensaries needs to be reduced to deal with "well-documented crime," called the report's conclusions "highly suspect and unreliable," saying that they were based on "faulty assumptions, conjecture, irrelevant data, untested

measurements and incomplete results."

In particular, the office challenged the idea that most dispensaries closed June 7, 2010, and were not open for at least 10 days. And it offered its own conjecture for the rise in crime: infighting among collective members, increased traffic for pot fire sales and customers disgruntled to find their dispensary closed.

Jacobson said Rand did not assume dispensaries shut down exactly on that date and said that, if more of them closed earlier or later, it would mean only that crime increased more than the report found. The researchers acknowledge that the results are subject to a large margin of error, so the increase in crime within less than a third of a mile could range from as low as 5.4% to as high as 114%.

"These are noisy data over a short period of time," Jacobson said. But she noted that the numbers, which were subjected to complex statistical analyses, clearly show crime increased.

The researchers did not try to draw conclusions on why crime rose, but offered the hypothesis that dispensaries may heighten security in the areas around them because they employ cameras and guards, increase late-night foot traffic, replace illicit street sales and draw heavier police patrols.

In a review of crime statistics from 2009 ordered by Los Angeles Police Chief Charlie Beck, the LAPD found that banks were much more likely to be robbed than dispensaries.

Cmdr. Andrew Smith, a department spokesman, said the LAPD had not yet reviewed the report, but would do so.

The Rand report notes that police departments in Denver and Colorado Springs, Colo., also studied crime around dispensaries and found no evidence that they attracted crime.

None of this surprises dispensary owners or their lawyers, who note that their surveillance records are sometimes requested by police to investigate crimes unrelated to selling marijuana.

"It's some empirical evidence that demonstrates that the security measures that make it safe for patients to obtain their medical marijuana also serve the community," said David Welch, a lawyer who has represented many L.A. dispensaries.

Yamileth Bolanos, who runs PureLife Alternative Wellness Center on South La Cienega Boulevard and also is president of the Greater Los Angeles Collectives Alliance, said, "I know that there's no crime around here. We watch everything."

But Steve Whitmore, a spokesman for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, strenuously disagreed with the report's conclusions. "Every time we shut down a dispensary, the crime and the disorder decrease," he said.

The report looks at such crimes as assaults and thefts, but not "disorder," nuisances such as loitering, double parking, loud noises and graffiti that sparked anger among neighborhood activists. Whitmore said those complaints are often what causes officials to act.

Eagle Rock, which has about a dozen dispensaries, has long been one of the city's pot hot spots.

Michael Larsen, president of the neighborhood council, said he only knows of one dispensary-related crime - an armed robbery -- but has heard countless complaints from irritated neighbors. He said most dispensaries that initially closed last summer have reopened, defying the city.

"Our main concern is the crime of illegal dispensaries illegally selling marijuana," Larsen said. "That's the crime that we're concerned about."

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Fw: Marijuana doesn't harm lungs.....

diana lejins

to:

Suja Lowenthal, Patrick O'Donnell, Gerrie Schipske, Dee Andrews, James Johnson, Rae Gabelich, Steve Neal, Gary DeLong, Bob Foster, Robert Garcia

01/11/2012 06:24 PM

Cc:

Nancy Muth

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NEWS FLASH:

CHICAGO -- Smoking a joint once a week or a bit more apparently doesn't harm the lungs, suggests a 20-year study that bolsters evidence that marijuana doesn't do the kind of damage tobacco does.

The results, from one of the largest and longest studies on the health effects of marijuana, are hazier for heavy users – those who smoke two or more joints daily for several years. The data suggest that using marijuana that often might cause a decline in lung function, but there weren't enough heavy users among the 5,000 young adults in the study to draw firm conclusions.

Still, the authors recommended "caution and moderation when marijuana use is considered."
Marijuana is an illegal drug under federal law although some states allow its use for medical purposes.

The study by researchers at the University of California, San Francisco, and the University of Alabama at Birmingham was released Tuesday by the Journal of the American Medical Association.

The findings echo results in some smaller studies that showed while marijuana contains some of the same toxic chemicals as tobacco, it does not carry the same risks for lung disease.

It's not clear why that is so, but it's possible that the main active ingredient in marijuana, a chemical known as THC, makes the difference. THC causes the "high" that users feel. It also helps fight inflammation and may counteract the effects of more irritating chemicals in the drug, said Dr. Donald Tashkin, a marijuana researcher and an emeritus professor of medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles. Tashkin was not involved in the new study.

Study co-author Dr. Stefan Kertesz said there are other aspects of marijuana that may help explain the results. Unlike cigarette smokers, marijuana users tend to breathe in deeply when they inhale a joint, which some researchers think might strengthen lung tissue. But the common lung function tests used in the study require the same kind of deep breathing that marijuana smokers are used to, so their good test results might partly reflect lots of practice, said Kertesz, a drug abuse researcher and preventive medicine specialist at the Alabama university.

The study authors analyzed data from participants in a 20-year federally funded health study in young adults that began in 1985. Their analysis was funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

The study randomly enrolled 5,115 men and women aged 18 through 30 in four cities: Birmingham, Chicago, Oakland, Calif., and Minneapolis. Roughly equal numbers of blacks and whites took part, but no other minorities. Participants were periodically asked about recent marijuana or cigarette use and had several lung function tests during the study.

Overall, about 37 percent reported at least occasional marijuana use, and most users also reported having smoked cigarettes; 17 percent of participants said they'd smoked cigarettes but not marijuana. Those results are similar to national estimates.

On average, cigarette users smoked about 9 cigarettes daily, while average marijuana use was only a joint or two a few times a month – typical for U.S. marijuana users, Kertesz said.

The authors calculated the effects of tobacco and marijuana separately, both in people who used only one or the other, and in people who used both. They also considered other factors that could influence lung function, including air pollution in cities studied.

The analyses showed pot didn't appear to harm lung function, but cigarettes did. Cigarette smokers' test scores worsened steadily during the study. Smoking marijuana as often as one joint daily for seven years, or one joint weekly for 20 years was not linked with worse scores. Very few study participants smoked more often than that.

Like cigarette smokers, marijuana users can develop throat irritation and coughs, but the study didn't focus on those. It also didn't examine lung cancer, but other studies haven't found any definitive link between marijuana use and cancer.