



New York Society
Of Addiction Medicine
NYSAM

1 Columbia Place • Albany, NY 12207
(518) 689-0142 • Fax (518)
426-1046

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Norman Wetterau, M.D.

IMMEDIATE PAST

PRESIDENT

Merrill Scot Herman, M.D.

TREASURER

Gregory C. Bunt, M.D.

SECRETARY

Jeffrey A. Selzer, M.D.

TREASURER

Gregory C. Bunt, M.D.

SECRETARY

Bruce Maslack, M.D.

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

Jun David, M.D.

EDUCATION AND
PROGRAM CHAIR

Jeffrey A. Selzer, M.D.

MEMORANDUM IN OPPOSITION

A.9016/S.4041-B

Medical Marijuana

Consistent with the position of the American Society of Addiction Medicine, the New York Society of Addiction Medicine (NYSAM) strongly opposes legislation that would permit the medicinal use of smoked marijuana primarily because, to date, no critical research has been performed that establishes its efficacy. NYSAM, therefore, opposes Assembly Bill A.9016/Senate Bill S.4041-B.

NYSAM maintains that marijuana should be subject to an FDA approval process which includes clinical trials to determine its efficacy as a medication, a position similar to that of the American Medical Association (AMA). The AMA Council on Scientific Affairs issued a full report in June 2001 that detailed potential uses, and potential benefits. In spite of the fact that this report included over 200 references, it maintained that adequate scientific evidence was not found to support a recommendation for the medical use of smoked marijuana at this time. The report (www.amaassn.org/ama/pub/article/2036-4299.html) recommended continued research and exploration of alternative delivery systems for the medicinal user of marijuana. The highly prestigious and independent Institute of Medicine issued a report that did not endorse current use of smoked medical marijuana except as part of research protocols or under the direction of an institutional type review board.

NYSAM opposes A.9016/S.4041-B for the following reasons:

1. Sufficient scientific evidence has not been found regarding the efficacy of smoked medical marijuana.
2. FDA approved Oral THC is already available by prescription
3. Language in A.9016/S.4041-B does not clearly delineate the specific diagnoses where use of smoked medical marijuana would be authorized.
4. There is no way to manage dosage with smoked marijuana, as THC concentrations can vary from 2% to 30%.
5. Hospital staff and other patients are subjected to toxic second-hand smoke and harm that will come to patients who smoke marijuana in the hospital.
6. No provision is made in bill language that addresses public safety and workforce considerations when smoked medical marijuana is used by workers in positions such as school bus drivers, heavy equipment operators, classroom personnel or others whose performance would be impaired by their use of medical marijuana.
7. A.9016/S.4041-B would allow prescriptions for medical marijuana to be valid for a full year, jeopardizing the physician's ability to monitor and intervene where necessary. Medical smoked marijuana should have stricter not more lenient standards than other medications.

NYSAM opposes this bill and urges further scientific inquiry prior to passage of legislation permitting the medicinal use of smoked marijuana.