



GRASS ROOTS *Advocate*



You might not know ...

50 UNEXPECTED BENEFITS OF CANNABIS

Medical Marijuana patients

JONATHAN ZAID & DAVE MURPHY

Toronto, Ontario 2016

GLOBAL MARIJUANA MARCH

Ontario Vapor Lounges

& PATIENTS' RIGHTS AT RISK



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Who We Are ...

P.A.C.E. ---- medical and non-medical cannabis advocates who promote cannabis education by participating at non-cannabis public events, through the Grassroots Advocate magazine and a weekly LIVE online radio broadcast found at LifestyleRadio.ca. We focus on the Canadian cannabis community and Canada's cannabis news, but do occasionally go International.

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EDITORIAL

By Al Graham

Vapor Lounges



In my last editorial (Fear Wins?) I mentioned that I would have some information in regards to what is offered at vapor lounges. Back in 2012 three friends and I got together to help me write a vapor lounge review for Treating Yourself Magazine. While it's been four years since we did that the information and what is offered is basically the same. What is different is the numbers of them as some have closed and others have opened since that article was published.

For our review we looked at everything from access, entertainment, food and how people could consume their medication plus a few other things such lighting and bathrooms.

What we found out overall was that the lounges were self-regulating themselves as there were no laws for or against them. They operated similar to a place that serves alcohol except without all the problems that the over consumption of alcohol brings.

All the locations had a policy that no minors were allowed and ID was required if asked to prove it. All of them had no tobacco smoking policies which is also a provincial law. Like a bar the lounges offer entertainment in the form of bands and comedy plus other special event nights.



While these locations are “vapor” lounges most of them allow you to smoke joints to using bongs as well as the vaporizers. To deal with the smoke most but not all the locations that we visited had some type of smoke ventilation. This would include exhaust fans to running a few large air filters throughout the location.

At a bar you buy an alcohol drink, in a lounge you can rent a vaporizer or a bong. Not only do they rent these items but many also sell food which includes snacks to a full meal. All of the locations were clean and were well staffed. When it comes to the police and their visits, back in 2012 a report put out by the City of Toronto stated that over a ten year period there had been only 76 interactions with the lounges. This would include a stop in to say hi to a

possible complaint. These are numbers that could possibly be reached and exceeded weekly in the cities entertainment district.



Personally I have been to these lounges numerous times. I've seen no problems and have had none myself. I visit them to meet up with other medical friends as lounges give medical patients a place to be part of society and not be held captive in our own homes. They give patients who travel a place to medicate safely without going to the alley.



When it comes to Bill 45 and the provinces concerns, I still don't know what scientific evidence they are using to say cannabis vapor is dangerous to an adult. But if it's the smoke they are worried about why shut down business that pay taxes, creates jobs, clean up the neighbourhoods to getting involved in their local BIA over smoke when there are options.

If you want to help save the vapor lounges, have a cannabis business or would like more information please visit the Cannabis Friendly Business Association (CFBA) at <http://www.cannabizassociation.ca/>



Why medical marijuana should be exempt from sales tax

By Lynne Belle-Isle, Joanne Simons, Cody Lindsay, Jonathan Zaid,
Sharon Baxter, Sandy Smeenk & Jackie Manthorne Apr 5/16

theglobeandmail.com

Research funded by the University of British Columbia's Institute for Healthy Living and Chronic Disease Prevention has shown that for many Canadians with chronic medical conditions, a lack of affordability can be a barrier to using cannabis for medical purposes. Sales tax on medical cannabis only adds to the financial burden.

Is Cannabis the Solution To Canada's Painkiller Epidemic?

By Marc Davis Apr 5/16 huffingtonpost.ca

It sounds like torture. A living nightmare. But it could just as easily happen to you or me. Accidents that result in severe nerve pain are quite common. Victoria, British Columbia businessman Dave Brownell, 68, found this out when he herniated a disc and ended up with serious nerve pain radiating throughout his body. "Over the years, I've had all sorts of injuries, including a broken neck and chopping off the end of my finger. But I never ever before experienced pain like this."

Medical marijuana dispensing eyed by Canadian Pharmacists Association

By The Canadian Press Apr 7/16 cbc.ca

An association that represents individual pharmacists has changed its stance on medical cannabis, saying pharmacists should play a "front-line" role in dispensing the drug. The Canadian Pharmacists Association says it has updated its position because it's growing concerned about what it calls a "lack of clinical oversight" in the use of medical marijuana.

Revised medical marijuana manual lists many adverse effects

By Dean Beeby Apr 11/16 cbc.ca

Health Canada has significantly expanded its medical marijuana manual for health-care professionals, adding major new sections about the potential adverse effects on the teenaged brain and driving safety. The document is much larger than the previous 2013 edition, and responds to doctors' complaints about having too little information on the medical science even as they're being asked to authorize marijuana for a growing number of patients.

Surge In Marijuana Dispensaries Catches Cities By Surprise

By Michelle McQuigge Apr 24/16 huffingtonpost.ca

TORONTO — A recent spike in the number of storefront marijuana dispensaries in parts of the country is prompting calls for the government to regulate an area not covered by current legislation. The Canadian Association of Medical Cannabis Dispensaries estimates there are at least 350 such storefronts in Canada, with dozens opening in Toronto alone in the past few months.

Vancouver's illegal medical marijuana dispensaries could face court action

By Mike Hager Apr 26/16 theglobeandmail.com

As many as three-quarters of Vancouver's illegal cannabis dispensaries have been ordered to close by Friday, though it's a deadline many are expected to ignore, setting off a process of fines and potential court actions that could take months to resolve.





Lawyer wants more patients to be able to grow their own pot

By The Canadian Press Apr 21/16 cbc.ca

A lawyer is asking a Federal Court judge to expand a ruling that found patients in Canada have the right to grow their own medical marijuana. John Conroy represented the plaintiffs in the constitutional challenge and he will be in court Friday with a motion to reconsider and vary the judge's order.



Medical pot dispensaries cause for concern, says Toronto city councillor

By Lisa Naccarato Apr 19/16 cbc.ca

The growing number of storefront medical marijuana dispensaries in Toronto — many of which have set up shop in the downtown area over the past year — are a cause for concern, says at least one member of city council. "These are — every single one of them — illegal," said Coun. Joe Cressy, who represents Ward 20 in Trinity-Spadina and heads the Toronto Drug Strategy Implementation Panel.



Advocates warn dispensaries' deadline will push millions of marijuana dollars back underground

By Travis Lupick Apr 27/16 straight.com

This Friday (April 29) is the deadline for illicit marijuana dispensaries to shut their doors or risk steep city fines and other disciplinary measures. The city estimates there are about 80 storefronts selling cannabis that will be affected by the order to close. By the Straight's calculation, that means \$10 million to \$29 million could be forced back into Vancouver's underground economy every month.



Union fights for mine worker's right to use medical marijuana

By CBC News Apr 20/16 cbc.ca

Canada is moving to legalize marijuana, but Saskatchewan businesses may be slower to accept it in the workplace. A recent case pits mining company Mosaic against an employee at its Colonsay potash mine. The worker had a prescription and uses medical marijuana for anxiety and headaches.



Veterans advocate says let doctors decide on medical marijuana

By Catherine Cullen Apr 30/16 cbc.ca

As the federal government tries to come up with a pot policy for military veterans, one medical marijuana user has some advice: don't limit how much prescription pot a veteran can eat, smoke or drink. "I think there should be no cap and that every case should be judged on individual merit and that the doctor's prescription is paramount," said Mike Blais, president and founder of Canadian Veterans Advocacy.



Cannabidiol reduces cigarette consumption in tobacco smokers

By Celia J.A. Morgan □, Ravi K. Das, Alyssa Joye, H. Valerie Curran, Sunjeev K. Kamboj

In conclusion, the preliminary data presented here suggest that CBD may be effective in reducing cigarette use in tobacco smokers, however larger scale studies, with longer follow-up are warranted to gauge the implications of these findings. These findings add to a growing literature that highlights the importance of the endocannabinoid system in nicotine addiction.

CANNABIS & YOU

50 unexpected benefits of cannabis (you might not know)

By Chip Whitley Dec 17/15 Originally published at greenflowermedia.com
Article is condensed.

It comes as no shock to anyone who knows cannabis that it's something of a miracle herb. But as we bring this plant out of the dark and into the light, it continues to blow our minds – just how great the benefits of marijuana actually are!

We are talking about benefits to public health, to the economy, and to each and every person who develops a positive relationship with this therapeutic plant.

1. It Can Help You Lose Weight

If you're an avid Green Flower reader, then you're already aware that cannabis users have been shown to be slimmer, on average, than non-users. That's because cannabis helps the body regulate insulin production, and manage caloric intake more efficiently.

2. It Can Regulate and Prevent Diabetes

Because cannabis helps regulate body weight, it only makes sense that it would help prevent and regulate Diabetes. Again, you can thank the herb's ability to regulate insulin production for this medical breakthrough.

3. It Fights Cancer

This is the big one that everybody's been talking about. Both scientists and the federal government have released a good amount of evidence showing thatcannabinoids fight certain types of cancer. It doesn't get much more substantial than that.

4. It Can Help Depression

Depression is one of the more widespread, yet least talked about medical conditions in America. And research is showing that cannabis can help treat it. “Using compounds derived from cannabis — marijuana — to restore normal endocannabinoid function could potentially help stabilize moods and ease depression,” [said Samir Haj-Dahmane](#), who is spearheading the research at Buffalo University.

5. It's Showing Promise in Treating Autism

Like many other high-profile disorders, autism may be a prime target for cannabis-based treatments. Science is digging into it, but in the meantime, some parents are using it to help [manage violent mood swings](#) in autistic children.

7. It Helps Regulate Seizures

Using medical cannabis to regulate seizures is another one of the more high-profile findings coming out of medical science. For folks with [disorders like Epilepsy](#), cannabis is showing immense promise.

8. It Can Help Broken Bones Heal Faster

Can you believe that cannabis can actually [mend broken bones](#)? It's true, as CBD evidently reacts chemically with collagen, spurring along the healing process. Another very exciting find.

9. It's a Treatment for ADHD

For those with serious trouble concentrating, or who have children suffering from ADD or ADHD, cannabis might be ['the treatment youve been waiting for](#). It's safer and more effective than medications like Ritalin or Adderall.

10. It Can Help Treat Serious Addictions

We already mentioned that cannabis can be a viable, safer alternative to substances like alcohol and tobacco, but did you know that it can also be used as a treatment for addictions to these substances, and more? Individuals addicted to serious drugs like heroin, opiates, and cocaine, are [showing promise](#) in ridding themselves of their addictions through cannabis therapy.

11. It Treats Glaucoma

One of the first big medical issue that cannabis was shown to effectively treat is Glaucoma. Ingesting cannabis [helps lower the pressure](#) in the eyeball, giving patients at least temporary relief.



12. It Can Improve Lung Health

You probably never saw this one coming – especially since pot is commonly associated with smoking, and smoking with chronic lung problems. But some conditions, including lung cancer and Emphysema, have been shown to regress [when cannabis is thrown into the mix](#).

13. It Helps Anxiety

Fact: cannabis can actually cause anxiety but there are [ways to potentially avoid that](#). And it's also true that for many people, cannabis can help alleviate anxiety disorders.

14. It Can Slow the Development of Alzheimer's Disease

Cognitive degeneration is pretty much unavoidable as we age, and Alzheimer's disease falls under that umbrella. The good news is that studies are showing [cannabis can stop the progression of Alzheimers](#), which may lead to longer, richer lives for millions.

15. It Helps M.S. Patients

Cannabis helps [alleviate many of the symptoms](#) associated with Multiple Sclerosis, most notably the tremors, spasms, and pain.

17. It Helps Individuals with Eating Disorders

A common use for medical cannabis is to help regulate eating patterns. Whether you eat too much, or too little, cannabis can help. This is especially helpful for people [suffering from disorders like Bulimia and Anorexia](#).

18. It Treats Arthritis

Another common ailment that cannabis is [used to treat is arthritis](#). The THC and CBD – as well as other cannabinoids – help sufferers deal with the pain, especially when using quality cannabis creams and balms.

19. It's Helpful for Those with PTSD

With so many veterans in need of effective treatments for PTSD after the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the discovery that [cannabis is a viable option](#) is fantastic news. And of course not all PTSD is combat-related. All sorts of traumatic experiences can put that fight-or-flight response into overdrive, and cannabis is the only medication to address that.

21. It Can Help People with AIDS/HIV

Cannabis can't directly cure the AIDS virus, but it can and does [help those living with it cope](#). Specifically, cannabis helps those living with AIDS/HIV maintain their diets and handle associated pains and aches.

22. It's Effective for Treating Nausea

Next up on our list of marijuana facts: nausea. This is a relatively common feeling, and one that is brought on by any number of things. Some people live with constant bouts on a daily basis, and as you can imagine, it can be debilitating. How does cannabis come into the picture? Chemical compounds in cannabis [react with brain receptors](#) to regulate feelings of nausea. This is a particular boon for chemotherapy patients (see #27).

24. It Can Treat Certain STDs

It's true – cannabis has been found to be at least somewhat effective in the treatment of a handful of sexually transmitted diseases, [including herpes](#) and chlamydia.

26. It Can Improve Skin Conditions

Who would've thought that cannabis could be a viable [treatment option for skin conditions like eczema](#)? A [quality cannabis topical](#) can do wonders.

27. It Can Help You Get Through Chemotherapy

This is another extremely popular use for medical cannabis. Those suffering from cancers and its treatments – [like chemotherapy](#) – have found comfort in cannabis's soothing effects.

28. It Regulates Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Those living with OCD [can also use cannabis](#) as a treatment option. CBD, which effectively regulates anxiety to some extent, is the main active ingredient which helps those with OCD get a handle on the disorder – and live more functional lives.

29. It Will Calm Asthma Attacks

You probably never saw this one coming. Cannabis and asthma? They're [apparently compatible](#), or so says science. Again, it has to do with cannabinoid receptors which help control coughing fits as well as the herb's ability to act as a bronchodilator. Smoking is obviously not the best method of delivery here, as that will likely only make things worse.



31. It Can Lower Your Blood Pressure

Smoking and low blood pressure are rarely synonymous. Thankfully there are several other ways to ingest cannabis, which can help with hypertension and other blood pressure issues.

32. It'll Calm Your Panic Attacks

As mentioned, calming anxiety is one of cannabis's more sought-after effects. As a result, it can help people control panic attacks. Of course, it'll depend on several physical factors, and what specific strains you use.

35. It Can Help Fight Climate Change

If we are able to get large-scale cannabis farms into production, it could help curb emissions, and fight climate change. This would happen through a number of ways, from providing more carbon-absorbing plants across vast farmlands, to trading off emission-producing animal farms for greener, cleaner cannabis grows.

36. It Creates Jobs

The creation of literally tens of thousands of jobs in the wake of legalization in places like Colorado and Washington is hard to ignore. And in an economy that has been in slow-recovery mode since 2009, looking at any opportunity to add more jobs can't be overlooked.

37. It Generates Revenue for Schools and Public Health Programs

Instead of having money funnel into the hands of low-level street dealers, or even cartels on the other side of the border, legal marijuana markets are putting money to work in local communities through tax revenue. Marijuana is now supplying millions to schools and public health programs, among other things.

40. It Lowers Crime Rates

Yes, making a previously illegal product legal lowers the crime rate – but it goes deeper than that. Numbers show that states in post-legalization status are seeing drops in crime, and perhaps most importantly, violent crime.

41. It Leads to Safer Roads

[Traffic deaths have gone down](#) in Colorado after legalization, which is fantastic news. This could be due to the substitution effect, people choosing pot over alcohol.



43. It Can Keep Your Pets Healthy

Cannabis, in some forms, can make for a healthy supplement for your pets. And for animals that are sick, or living with chronic pain, cannabis-based treats [can offer some relief](#).

44. It Can Help You Have More Pleasant Dreams

Plagued by bad dreams? Try cannabis before you hit the sack, and see if it makes a difference. For some people, [it's doing the trick](#). For others, particularly those with PTSD, it can also eliminate dreams completely. The reason, it turns out, is that cannabis impacts REM sleep – the part of the cycle during which you dream.

45. It Can Bring Your Energy Levels up

A lot of people are tired. But a small subset of individuals suffer from Chronic Fatigue Syndrome – a disorder that is effectively treated with [certain cannabis compounds and strains](#). Just make sure you're picking the right ones if you want to avoid fatigue.

46. It'll Help You Sleep

On the flip side, you can [use cannabis to help you get to sleep](#). Again, though, it'll depend on what specific strains you're using, and your physical and psychological makeup. You may have to experiment a bit to get the desired effect.

50. It Can Protect Your Brain

Cannabis as a brain protector? It's true. Scientists are finding that [chemical compounds found in cannabis actually help protect our brains](#).

This article has been condensed. To read it completely please go to <http://greenflowermedia.com/article/50-life-enhancing-benefits-of-cannabis/>

PATIENT IN THE NEWS

How a headache sufferer got his insurance to cover Cannabis

By CBC News Apr 11 2016 Originally posted at cbc news

Who: Jonathan Zaid is a student at the University of Waterloo and executive director of the group Canadians for Fair Access to Medical Marijuana. The group is "dedicated to protecting and improving the rights of medical cannabis patients." It's also partnered with Aphria, a company that produces and supplies medical marijuana.

His medical condition: In an interview Monday on *Metro Morning*, Zaid said he suffers from a condition called new daily persistent headaches, a rare neurological condition that causes constant headaches, along with sleep and concentration problems. Saying the condition left him with "zero quality of life," Zaid dropped out of Grade 8 and home-schooled through his high school years. "When I turned to medical cannabis, there were no options left. The costs were starting to add up significantly."



Why did you want the cost of your medical marijuana covered by insurance? Zaid said he'd been sick for five years before even considering medical cannabis. He tried 48 prescription medications, along with multiple therapies, all of which were covered by his insurer without question. Except medical cannabis. "The costs were starting to add up significantly and I didn't understand why it shouldn't be covered like every other drug. It was turning around my life. It was affording me the ability to go back to school to work, to do all of these great things."

What did the insurance company say when you first tried to get it covered? Zaid was initially turned down, because his insurer said medical marijuana lacked a drug identification number, and is not a fully approved drug in Canada.

What changed? Zaid talked to the student union (who administers the student health plan) and, after a discussion that lasted eight months, "they came to the conclusion that they should cover it because it supports my academics and should be treated like a medication."

Health Canada doesn't endorse medical marijuana and the Canadian Medical Association says there isn't enough evidence to support its use, so why should insurance companies pay for its use? Zaid said it comes down to physicians prescribing it. If a doctor weighs the risks and benefits of the medication for a patient, it should be allowed. "Most of the patients on it are using it as a last-line therapy," he said. "Most of these people are severely disabled."

How do you go about convincing your insurance company they should cover medical marijuana? He suggests patients make it clear that medical marijuana can be more beneficial to them than opiates.

Why are you pushing this? After all, medical marijuana is a big business. Zaid says he's working with licensed producers to expand access to patients who are often too ill to lobby themselves.

Where would you be without access to medical marijuana? "I'd probably be back where I was sitting at home and doing nothing," said Zaid. "An exciting activity before was going outside to a grocery store, that's the most I could do in a day. And now I can go to school and do all kinds of stuff."

Cancer patient wants to grow his own medical marijuana

By Elizabeth McMillan Apr 10/16 Originally published at cbc.ca

A Nova Scotia man living with brain cancer is appealing to the prime minister in an effort to get a licence to grow medical marijuana.

Dave Murphy, 27, says he wrote to Justin Trudeau and is speaking out now because he wants to put pressure on the federal government to move forward with legislation to legalize and regulate home-grown medical marijuana.

Murphy has a licence to possess medical marijuana, but questions why he can't also grow cannabis on the small farm where he lives in Blandford, N.S.



"I'd like to be able to make my own, that I know everything that goes into it," he said. "So I can actually treat it as a medicine in the proper fashion where I understand what I am taking in and I can control it," he said.

Impatient patient

In February, a Federal Court judge struck down federal regulations restricting the rights of medical marijuana patients to grow their own cannabis. The court gave the Liberal government six months to come up with new rules.

Murphy told Radio-Canada he's becoming impatient and has considered growing a small amount of marijuana himself, so he could cut up whole plants and make an edible solution he could use as needed. "Even if it's just the hope it gives me, I want to fight for that," he said. Up until now, Murphy has relied on mail-order marijuana, which he says is expensive and doesn't have the quality or strength he wants.

He also purchases some products from dispensaries, though he says they still fall under a "gray area" of the law. He was present when Farm Assists on Gottingen Street was searched last fall, an incident he says triggered PTSD.

Coping using cannabis

Murphy discovered he had a brain tumour five years ago, after getting an MRI for an unrelated head injury. He was in his third year of university. He says cannabis has been one of the things that has helped him cope with the diagnosis.

Moving to a rural area where he can work outside has given him new focus.

"I needed to feel like I was fighting cancer myself, at least a little bit. And try to find a life I could live happily," he said.

Murphy says after reading extensively about nutrition he set up a small garden and started experimenting with hens. This year, he's setting up a greenhouse on his property and has plans to fish and raise turkeys and chickens.

But Murphy struggles with night terrors and PTSD, which he says are linked to his diagnosis and the many procedures that followed. At one point, he underwent an eight-hour surgery that removed part of his brain while he was still awake.

"Some mornings I wake up and I've had dark dreams and I can't remember. I'll cry and I'll dry heave into the toilet and I'll shake and I'll feel like it's freezing cold in my house. I know it's those fears that get to me," he said.

"Frankly I roll up a joint or I turn on a vaporizer and that really helps me shake it off. I go for a walk, spend some time with my dogs and try to build myself back up into a good day. "

Pink Cannabis Lemonade

eatyourcannabis.com

Time Required: 1 hour and 30 minutes

Yields 8 Servings

What You Need:

$\frac{2}{3}$ cups sugar

3 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups water

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup lemon juice, freshly squeezed

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup cranberry juice cocktail

4 tablespoons Cannabis Tincture



Steps:

Combine sugar and 1 cup water in a small saucepan. Bring to boil. Stir to dissolve sugar.

Allow to cool at room temperature, then cover and refrigerate until cold.

Stir together the chilled syrup, lemon juice, cranberry juice, Cannabis Tincture and remaining water in a large pitcher.

Serve over ice.

Banana Cannabis Ice Cream (Vegan!)

eatyourcannabis.com

Time Required: 20 to 30 hours

Yields about 1 Quart of Ice Cream

What You Need:

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ quart ice cream freezer container

large saucepan, fine strainer & large bowl

2 cups Cannabis Almond Milk

1 cup Coconut Milk

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar

1 tablespoon corn starch

pinch of salt

4 bananas, pureed

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup peanut butter (optional)



Steps:

Combine Cannabis Almond Milk, coconut milk, sugar and cornstarch in a large saucepan and whisk together thoroughly. Cook over medium heat while stirring constantly until mixture starts to thicken, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat and allow to warm. Pour the warm almond milk mixture through a fine strainer and into a large bowl. Discard any solids.

Chill almond milk mixture uncovered in refrigerator for 1 hour; stir occasionally. Place plastic wrap on top of milk mixture after 1 hour. Let chill for another 12 to 24 hours. Pour cold mixture into 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ quart ice cream freezer container and freeze.

Remove container from freezer after 2 hours, or until ice cream starts to firm but is still soft. Stir in banana puree and peanut butter. Mix well until peanut butter is equally distributed. Return container to freezer for another 6 hours, or until ice cream is firm. Let stand at room temperature for 5 minutes before serving.



New Brunswick advised to prepare for legal marijuana

By Dylan Hackett Apr 11/16 cbc.ca

A Colorado doctor says New Brunswick needs to get citizens up to speed on legalized marijuana well before it arrives. Dr. Larry Wolk helped his state introduce legal pot four years ago. He says people there had many fears and state officials had to do plenty of homework beforehand. Dr. Larry Wolk helped his state introduce legal pot four years ago as the executive director and chief medical officer of the state's public health department. He says people there had many fears and state officials had to do plenty of homework beforehand.



Canadian marijuana legalization appears to be on fast track

By Nick Waddell Apr 12/16 cantechletter.com

In a research update to clients this morning, Atkinson notes that in an interview with the CBC's "On The Coast" host Stephen Quinn, Goodale said the government was moving forward with its goal of legalizing recreational marijuana in Canada and that a legalization task force of representatives from the federal, provincial and municipal governments would soon be appointed.



How will Canada crack down on marijuana-impaired drivers?

By Wallis Snowdon Apr 25/16 cbc.ca

Law enforcement agencies should prepare for an influx of drug-impaired drivers before marijuana is legalized in Canada, says an American state trooper. When Colorado legalized marijuana in 2014, police weren't prepared to crack down on those who light up before getting behind the wheel, said Lt.-Col. Kevin Eldridge.



Why are we still prosecuting marijuana use?

By Craig Jones Apr 15/16 ipolitics.ca

The Trudeau Liberals came to power on October 19 promising to legalize cannabis for personal use, undoing a policy error lingering from the early 20th Century. That error was a costly one for many thousands of otherwise mainstream Canadians — mostly young people — who have had to carry the burden of a criminal record for the balance of their lives. The stigma of a criminal record turned out, in time, to be more harmful to their lives than the use of cannabis.



Provinces' role in marijuana legalization TBD says federal health minister

By James Wood April 26, 2016 calgaryherald.com

Jane Philpott announced last week at the United Nations that the Canadian government would introduce legislation next spring to legalize pot. The Liberals plan to appoint a task force to work out the issues raised by legalization, including the responsibilities of provincial governments. Speaking to reporters at the Liberals' cabinet retreat in Kananaskis, Philpott said it's too early to talk specifics but noted provinces already have a regulatory role.



Bill Blair contradicts Jane Philpott; says pot activists won't be on marijuana task force

By VassyKapelos Apr 25/16 globalnews.ca

Jane Philpott says "I'm not ruling anything out," Philpott said from the Liberal cabinet retreat in Kananaskis, Alberta on Monday. "I've assured those activists that their voices will be heard and they'll have an opportunity to provide their input to the task force, but the task force is primarily focused on the science and the evidence and the best advice of experts that we can get going forward," Parliamentary Secretary to the Justice Minister Bill Blair said.



Organized crime 'may infiltrate' new legal pot regime, internal federal document warns

By Jim Bronskill Apr 24/16 nationalpost.com

OTTAWA — Legalizing marijuana won't automatically make Canada's black market for weed go up in smoke or banish organized crime, warns a draft federal discussion paper on regulation of the drug. Justin Trudeau's Liberal government says a legal marijuana regime will keep pot out of the hands of children and deny criminals the profits of illicit dealing.



Pot legalization coming, so stop possession arrests, say some

By Lucas Powers Apr 23/16 cbc.ca

The federal government's promise to begin the process of legalizing cannabis in 2017 is amplifying calls from lawyers and advocates for an end to arrests and prosecutions for some weed-related crimes that have "clogged up the system" and left tens of thousands of Canadians with a criminal record.



Federal marijuana legislation to be introduced in spring 2017, Philpott says

By CBC News Apr 20/16 cbc.ca

Federal legislation to legalize marijuana will be ready in a year, Canada's health minister told the UN at a special session of the General Assembly in New York today. "We will introduce legislation in spring 2017 that ensures we keep marijuana out of the hands of children and profits out of the hands of criminals," Jane Philpott said in her prepared speech to delegates.



U.S. experts urge Canada to cultivate social standards around pot use

By Grant Robertson Apr 17/16 theglobeandmail.com

As the Trudeau government prepares to draw up legislation that would legalize marijuana for recreational use, leading policy experts in the United States have some pointed advice for Canada: Rules are important, but cultivating unwritten social standards around how people use the drug are just as crucial.



Pot taxes won't go into general revenue: Bill Blair

By Vassy Kapelos Apr 27/16 globalnews.ca

OTTAWA — Toronto's former top cop turned Liberal pot czar, Bill Blair, is laying down the gauntlet on any money pot brings into federal coffers, ahead of legislation next year. "There will be a reinvestment of any revenue generated to government in helping us keep our communities safe," Blair said in an interview with Global News.



Here's How Ontario's Anti-Vaping Laws Could Destroy the Province's Pot Industry

By Manisha Krishnan Apr 28/16 vice.com

When asked to explain the fuss over Ontario laws that make it illegal to vape medical marijuana in public, Hot Box vapour lounge owner Abi Roach told VICE about her friend who is dying of cancer. She'd been bringing him a concentrated THC oil, which he used a vape pen to consume in his hospital room. "He couldn't even get out of bed," she said. But under bills 45 and 178, which essentially equate medical weed to tobacco, he'd have to be placed in a wheelchair and taken outside to medicate.

Global Marijuana March – Toronto 2016

By Al Graham

Over the last many years I've attended the annual Toronto Global Marijuana March (GMM) as a cannabis patient advocate. I've gone there to be part of the march each and every time but there were times that I was there in a dual role. A few times I did it for Treating Yourself Magazine but there was a time where I also reported on it for my friend Diesel Phillips.

Diesel, who at the time was a weekend DJ at a local radio station, was also a cannabis supporter. With an opportunity to help educate people about it he created The Flower Hour that would air Saturday or Sunday from 4-5pm. During this segment he would play psychedelic music with some of it containing the word cannabis in them or themed that way.

There was also his buddy Jay Blaze who'd call and talk about the latest movie to what he had been doing lately. Following him was my "Reefer Report" where I spoke live about some cannabis news to the latest events. This is when I had my opportunity to report from the GMM. For me it was my first live on location report and it was something that I really enjoyed, even though because of the loud music, I had to leave the park to make my call.

I hadn't an opportunity to do something like that since then that was until recently. The long streak ended when I attended the 2016 GMM in Toronto and I was able to set something up with Al Rapp, the man behind Lifestyle Radio. For this year's event I attended with a microphone, two sets of headphones and one hand held microphone which all plugged into my cell phone.



Sandra and Al

After some planning with Al he invited his co-hosts from The 420 Radio Show (Marcel Gignac and Laurie MacEachern) to join us for a conversation that would up being 4.5hrs long. We all decided to just let things flow. We'd talk about the march and do some interviews and if we needed a break we'd play a song and commercial set.

Once we were all ready to go Al hit the live switch shortly after noon. With a few advocates in mind to talk with it was decided I would just be free to get a guest and the crew would join in with questions. My friend Erin Maloughney offered to be our first guest and a fine job she did in getting things started. I've never interviewed Erin before so I was surprised she would be the first of many. Following her was patient advocate Sandra Petite and Michael Thomas of Dads for Marijuana. I could have stuck to the same spot all day but the plan was to move around and that we did.

From there we interviewed people such as Tracy Curley and Matt Mernagh before we talked to some of the vendors to get their feeling on the march to seeing how business was doing. One person I did seek out and had the pleasure to meet was Anthony Foster of Hamilton Vape. Anthony and I had never met but he reached out to PACE a year ago for some therapeutic cannabis information so he could share it at an event he was involved in. This past spring he was sent more information that he gave away at the Hamilton 420 as well as at the GMM. It was good to talk to him and hear about the good things he was doing. While finding these things out I also got to meet his mom, who was a very joyful person on this day. It's good to see the family working together.





Al and Sam Mallace

The next thing I knew was that the march had already started so I rushed along to catch up to it. Along the route I was able to talk with people such as Sam Malace, Danielle Dabs and people who I had never met before. One of these people was a guy who had a portable dab cart in tow. He told me that business was great and that he couldn't believe he had dabbled people out on the roadways in downtown Toronto.

When we returned to Queen's Park we continued the interviews and were able to talk with people such as Naomi Poley, whose interview was broadcasted live on Youtube during the 420 to Terry Parker Jr, Tracy Lamourie and a few others.



Erick and Wayne of CannaDaze

Throughout the afternoon we were able to give away some free gifts from [Nexus Cannabis Seed Wholesalers](#) and bring the [Lifestyle Radio](#) listeners the sounds plus help them visualize what was happening all day long. My friends Laurie and Marcel who co-hosted the show have never been to Toronto's Global Marijuana March but on this day they felt like they were. Those we interviewed were very supportive and believed that what we were doing was a great idea.

In the end our mobile LIVE radio set up successfully interviewed twenty three different people who were patients, business owners to the recreational consumers over a 4.5hr period. With this success we plan on doing more of this in the future.



Al with Terry Parker Jr



A big thank you goes out to all those we interviewed and to Al, Marcel and Laurie for being part of this very special day.

If you missed the action and want to hear how the day went, you can catch the entire march and the interviews at <https://www.spreaker.com/show/interview-s-and-specials> or at <http://pace-online.ca/the-pace-radio-show.html>

Ontario Vapor Lounges and Patients' Rights at Risk

By Tracy Lamourie Originally published at cannabisdigest.ca Condensed to fit.

It's a confusing time for cannabis advocates in Ontario.

On one hand, the canna community and the businesses that serve it appear to be flourishing. The vapor lounges have existed in the Toronto area for a decade; recently they have multiplied, and are popping up in smaller communities across Ontario.

In cannabis vapor lounges across the province, people of all ages, races, gender, health issues, musical tastes gather together, as they always have, in peaceful environments to share a toke, a dab, a smile, a social moment to relieve isolation. Most of them aren't aware that this could all be over soon. They can't imagine a scenario where these places could be closed. After all, these are the business owners who a decade ago braved law enforcement to provide these safe spaces for patients, their advocates, and others who prefer cannabis to alcohol, and friendly vapor lounges to bars. What could possibly shut their doors now; after a decade of successful business, paying taxes, operating with the support of their communities, grateful customers and happy regulars?

It's called Ontario Bill 45, and it very possibly might slam those vapor lounge doors shut, locking them – permanently – behind the last customers to exit, on the last day of June 2016.

Abi Roach, the founder of the Hot Box, Toronto's original vapor lounge space, has taken a leading role in the fight to kill the bill. She sprang to action, revamping the “Cannabis Friendly Business Association,” originally formed to fight the municipal battle when a Toronto City Councillor tried to shut the city's vapor lounges down a few years ago – and creating a formidable organization to lead the canna-business community.

In an exclusive interview with Cannabis Digest, Abi stresses that the CFBA isn't just for Ontario, and it doesn't exist just to fight this battle. “We need numbers,” she says. “We need members from Newfoundland to Vancouver Island. It's not only this. If we win this battle, we have longevity, we'll be able to fight for dispensaries and compassion clubs, and other kinds of cannabis related business as they try to regulate, control – or even shut them down. The CFBA is working with other cannabis lobbying groups like the Cannabis Growers Association of Canada and Sustainable Cannabis. As we move towards legalization it's important that the interests of small and medium sized cannabis businesses – and by extension, the customers we serve – are recognized.”

Abi and the CFBA have been working hard to educate consumers, business owners, patients, and other affected stakeholders about just what this bill will mean. People expressed surprise that those who never seemed to worry about police enforcement of cannabis laws are telling us that it could be Bylaw officers who ultimately shut these spaces down. As Abi points out, “They'll come in every day and fine you thousands of dollars, and then when you can't pay, there goes your Master Business License.”

The Bill has a 40 day consultation period leading up to July 1st implementation, unless it can be stopped. Essentially, Ontario patients who medicate with cannabis and the businesses that serve them have been caught in a web of legislation meant to equate vaping with smoking. It goes even further, says Rick Vrecic, a partner in True Compassion Toronto, “Medical marijuana users are being treated like tobacco smokers. The comparison should be medical marijuana users and those with asthma inhalers!”. True Compassion Toronto says they joined the CFBA mostly to be a voice for their patients, “standing up for those who can't.” Rick is particularly concerned, from the patient perspective, because Bill 45 will not only close down vapor lounges – but will stop medical marijuana patients from being able to vaporize anywhere that smoking cigarettes is not currently allowed – basically anywhere except a patient's private home — and if they live in public housing, or need the care of a PSW, even private homes will not be exempt.





Sam Mellace, of New Age Medical Solutions, says “Vaping pens are another tool to administer cannabis. It should be subsidized and should be declared a medical instrument. Cleaner and more efficient for people, like seniors, to administer cannabis, due to arthritic pain, chronic ailments due to old age, and other chronic pain.” Sam says it is ridiculous that cannabis should be covered under the same law as tobacco. “There is no comparison,” he says, “You just can't compare cannabis, a medicine, to tobacco, with 150 carcinogens and over 1000 chemicals in tobacco!”

Jeffrey Allen, a medical marijuana patient who with his business partner Michael Kaer, recently announced plans to open a vapor lounge called “The Other Side,” in the small, conservative city of Chatham Ontario, says: “Ontario Bill 45 would effectively make vapour lounge establishments, illegal to operate. Patients would effectively be made prisoners in their own homes. We operate on the concept of harm reduction in a community that needs strong action of the sort. This bill negates any intention to move forward in helping patients. It further stigmatizes them. Just a few months ago, they announced that medical cannabis is just that, medicine, and that smoking/vaping in any public establishment was permitted, with the clause that employers/business owners could override that, and ask them to step outside, or to a designated area. Now, all of a sudden they completely switch gears, and demonize cannabis patients, yet again.”

Those patients are expressing outrage. Loretta Ann Clark says: “Lounges are protected by section 7 of the Charter as safe inhalation sites. They each are unique in community programming, addressing needs, and proving the power of comedy, community, music and art. Toronto, as one of the greatest human rights towns on earth, should lead the way. To take away such places will bring heaps of negativity, resulting in human rights violations and a rebellion that is sure to shame the province. We have reached a breaking point with the persecution and fraudulent claims of prohibition.”



So what is being done?

In mid March, Ontario canna- business leaders met for an emergency meeting at the Hot Box to discuss, educate, and strategize. They determined to raise funds to hire a professional lobby group, a legal team, and to build the organization. With over 100 attendees representing more than 60 related canna-businesses, Abi Roach commented on how much the industry has grown in the decade since she opened. . . .”At one time there were barely any of us, now we can't even fit 5% of the industry in the same room.

On April 1st, the CFBA released the results of a recently commissioned poll, done by prominent polling firm Mainstreet Research, which determined that “a majority of Ontarians would support safe spaces for medicinal cannabis patients across Ontario; 56% approve of safe spaces for medical cannabis patients to learn about and consume cannabis”. Building on this, a mainstream media release is expected this week; the CFBA is meeting with politicians in all parties, and they are hopeful that they will prevail. However, the urgent support of the national cannabis community is necessary.

The CFBA needs donations, the co-operation of Canadian cannabusinesses from coast to coast, and they are also asking for impact letters from patients, business owners, cannabis lounge users, and other stakeholders.

Visit : <http://www.cannabizassociation.ca/> to see what you can do.

Article has been condensed. Please got to <http://cannabisdigest.ca/ontario-vapor-lounges-and-patients-rights-at-risk/> to read it in its entirety

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Niagara Falls:

The Vapor Trail Lounge - 5444 Victoria Ave. (905) 246-9070

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Puff Dogs Vapor Lounge - 55 St. Paul St. W. (289) 362-5461

Toronto:

Vape on the Lake
2985 Lakeshore Blvd. W. (647) 349-0214

Vapor Central - 667 #2 Yonge St. (416) 923-3556

The Hot Box Café - 204 Augusta Ave. (416) 203-6990

Underground Comedy Club
670 Queen St. E. (416) 732-7761

Vapor Social - 894 College St. (647) 467-0354

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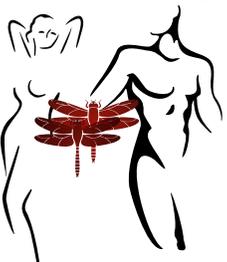


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