



## MESSAGE FROM MARSHA

### DOCTORS AND MEDICAL MARIJUANA PART 1

This year the Colorado legislature has been wrestling with honoring the people's intent regarding medical marijuana and the safety and welfare of the citizens of Colorado. In the 2000 general election, Colorado voters passed a constitutional amendment (Amendment 20) making it legal for individuals to use medical marijuana to alleviate the symptoms of several debilitating conditions.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (DPHE) was charged with implementing and administering the program. Since the Obama administration announced in 2009 they will not seek to arrest medical marijuana users the number of *legal and illegal* marijuana users, growers and sellers has skyrocketed in Colorado. As of September 20, 2009 there were 17,356 people on the registry. Since then it is estimated that 40,000 people will apply for the registry in FY 2010-2011 alone!

Our children are at the greatest risk! There are plenty of reputable reports reflecting the juvenile brain development and learning disabilities that occur as a result of marijuana use. One reason why there is run away medical marijuana use is due to the lack of oversight of the physicians prescribing the marijuana. One way to tackle the physician oversight is in SB109. SB109 intends to provide the necessary oversight of physicians working with medical marijuana and requiring them to have a "bona fide" relationship before a physician may certify a patient would benefit from medical marijuana. In order for a physician to recommend medical marijuana to patients they must:

- Hold a doctor of medicine or osteopathic medicine from an accredited school,
- Have a valid, unrestricted license to practice medicine,
- Have a valid U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) controlled substance registration,
- Must maintain record-keeping systems for all patients certified by the physician.

If a physician has violated any of the laws or rules established by DPHE the State Health Agency will conduct a hearing to determine if a violation occurred. If a violation occurred the physician's license shall be restricted, revoked or suspended, and sanctions may be filed against them.

Since medical marijuana is currently legal, it is policy maker's responsibility to balance the safety and welfare of all of the citizens with the impact of this constitutional amendment. In addition to SB109, we are debating HB1284 a bill defining the regulation of medical marijuana. Stay tuned for additional policy updates regarding medical marijuana and the impact it may have to your community. Contact me at 719-238-5600 or [marshalooper@gmail.com](mailto:marshalooper@gmail.com) if you have any comments or questions.

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