



RHODE ISLAND  
MEDICAL SOCIETY

## NEWS *Flash*

*Physicians dedicated to the health of Rhode Islanders since 1812*

### ***Special to RIMS Members***

*May 13, 2008*

[A little background and update on medical marijuana in Rhode Island:](#) Since the Rhode Island Medical Marijuana Act became law more than a year ago, 183 Rhode Island physicians have recommended medical marijuana to 360 patients. The new law permits physicians to “recommend” (rather than “prescribe”) marijuana for patients when the “benefits would likely outweigh the health risks” and when the patient is suffering from a qualifying medical condition. Such conditions include cancer, glaucoma, HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, Crohn’s Disease, Alzheimer’s, and other severe, chronic, debilitating medical conditions that cause pain, nausea, seizures, spasms or wasting.

The overriding purpose of the Rhode Island Medical Marijuana Act is to protect the autonomy of doctors in selecting appropriate treatments and medications for their patients. The Act is designed to protect physicians from penalization by the Board of Medical Licensure and Discipline and to remove potential risk to a physician’s DEA license.

Twelve states have now enacted medical marijuana laws, and medical marijuana has been recommended to hundreds of thousands of patients. RIMS knows of no case in which a physician in any of the 12 states has lost a DEA or medical license as a result of recommending medical marijuana.

The Rhode Island Medical Society supported the passage of the Medical Marijuana Act and supports the Medical Marijuana Program as implemented by the Department of Health. If you have questions about medical marijuana, please call Steven DeToy, Director of Government Relations and Public Affairs for RIMS, at 331-3207.