

NY Medical Marijuana Bill Debated on Long Island



Substance abuse treatment providers aired their concerns at the Long Island Marijuana Summit recently at the Seafield Center, a rehab facility in Amityville.

The Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence along with the Seafield and Caron Treatment Centers, hosted a so-called "Marijuana Summit" to detail the push for legislation in New York and talk about the experiences in other states who have already done so.

The proposed Compassionate Care Act, allowing certified patients to have up to eight ounces of medical marijuana, was introduced by State Sen. Diane Savino (D-Staten Island/Brooklyn) and Assemb. Dick Gottfried (D-Manhattan). The bill is in committee but both lawmakers hope that it passes before the state legislature goes on summer break in June.

If it were to become law, New York would join 19 states and the District of Columbia to have legalized medicinal cannabis since California became the first to do so in 1996. New York is bordered by four of those states—Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont and New Jersey.

Although the federal government classifies marijuana as a controlled substance, the Obama administration directed the Department of Justice to not prosecute medical marijuana patients in 2009.

Colorado and Washington state voters also took the unprecedented steps of approving referendums legalizing recreational marijuana in November. It remains unclear if the feds will be as relaxed about recreational reefer in those states as they have been about medicinal marijuana.

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<http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2013/04/08/organizers-of-l-i-summit-say-fda-should-decide-merits-of-medical-marijuana-not-states/>