

## 2008 Illinois Medical Cannabis Bills

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16 February 2008 For Immediate Release Chicago, IL- Sick and dying patients might soon be able to seek relief if Illinois lawmakers can pass the Alternative Treatment for Serious Diseases Causing Chronic Pain and Debilitating Conditions Act. The act would allow for the compassionate use of cannabis by those whose doctors recommend using the plant as an alternative form of treatment and was introduced by State Senator John Cullerton. Patients would have to apply to the Department of Public Health and would be issued a registry card permitting the patient or a primary caregiver to possess up to 2.5 ounces of cannabis and up to twelve plants in an enclosed locked room. Under the law, patients would be protected against criminal and civil penalties for their medical use but would not be able to smoke in public places. Neither private insurers nor governmental medical assistance programs would have to cover the costs associated with the use of medical cannabis and those with more than the allowed amount or abusing the system would face stiff penalties as well. Senate Bill 2865 was introduced the same day that the American College of Physicians released a position paper supporting patients' rights and access to medical cannabis. The ACP also urged a review of cannabis as a schedule 1 controlled substance and further added that more research should be done into the differing forms of cannabis administration. A similar bill was introduced in the house, House Bill 5499, the Medical Marijuana Act. Both bills will enact the same medical cannabis program and will greatly benefit those who can find relief in the medical use of cannabis. Illinois already has a medical cannabis program but it is not implemented and the federal government shut down their own program after too many applications at the peak of the HIV/AIDS scare of the early 1990s. Currently there are twelve states with medical cannabis programs and just a few surviving members of the federal program who are permitted to use cannabis medically. Hopefully Illinois can join them in tolerating the use of cannabis as an alternative treatment for those who need it most. All are encouraged to support this legislation by contacting their elected state officials. Contact Dan Linn Executive Director, Illinois NORML 847-341-0591 The Illinois chapter of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws

Free Membership to anyone arrested for a cannabis offense or lost opportunity due to a drug test.