

LTE: OK Medical Marijuana Use

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March 25, 2007
Chicago Sun-Times

The recent decision handed down by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals found that although there is not yet a constitutional right to use medical marijuana, such a right might eventually be recognized as fundamental. While this provides a glimmer of hope to patients who might actually live long enough to see our federal government stop treating sick people like criminals, it does absolutely nothing to help my mother.

She died several years ago of cancer. We watched helplessly as she wasted away on the powerful narcotics prescribed to control her pain. The morphine did kill her pain, but it also killed her appetite. She hardly ate those last few weeks.

I'm not suggesting that we condone the recreational use of marijuana, just as I wouldn't suggest that we condone the recreational use of morphine. I'm not suggesting that every person with a common cold run out and use marijuana, just as I wouldn't suggest that they use morphine. I just don't understand how letting people waste away on powerful narcotics like morphine is better than letting them try marijuana, especially when current research supports the use of marijuana as an effective treatment for some.

The Illinois Legislature will soon vote on a bill that would allow people like my mother to use medical marijuana to help control pain and stimulate appetite. I hope that they do.