Buzz Kill

The FDA sends medical marijuana up in smoke

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In April, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) decreed that smoking marijuana, which many people with HIV use to fight weight loss, nausea and neuropathy, was medically useless. Medical marijuana is legal in 11 states, but FDA spokeswoman Susan Bro says, “There is no data proving that smoked marijuana has a value in treating any medical condition.” This contradicts a 1999 finding by the National Academy of Sciences, which claimed pot was “moderately well suited” for such treatments.

Hilary McQuie of the Harm Reduction Coalition says, “[The FDA] didn’t use any new data, and they also gave approval to test a new marijuana spray [Sativex]. It’s contradictory.” McQuie believes the FDA’s stance is tied to pharmaceutical companies’ agenda of pushing their own smokeless remedies. “This administration has a puritanical, antipleasure agenda. [Drug companies] want people to [use their products] and not grow marijuana,” she says. States make the ultimate decision. So don’t hock your heat lamp yet.

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