

## Medical marijuana gets first legislative hearing in PA

A Pennsylvania House committee in Harrisburg held the first hearing ever on medical marijuana in the Keystone State on Dec. 5th. The hearing, which featured a raft of supportive witnesses, sparked interest and questioning from legislators and left medical marijuana advocates optimistic.

The hearing before the House Health and Human Services Committee was on HB 1393, introduced by Rep. Mark Cohen (D-Philadelphia). The bill

would provide immunity from arrest for patients suffering from HIV/AIDS, cancer, and other illnesses who have a doctor's recommendation to use marijuana and a registration ID card.

Patients could possess an ounce of marijuana and up to six plants. The bill also provides for state-licensed compassion centers which could sell marijuana to patients. Such sales would be subject to state and local sales taxes

## The routine operations of a nearby syringe exchange

The following is a monthly report from a syringe exchange in a Pennsylvania city roughly comparable in size to Lancaster. It lists the variety of services administered on site to protect the individual and the public. It also describes efforts to refer clients for guidance and treatment:

- *White Male: 42*
- *Latino: 52*
- *African American female: 24*
- *White female: 33*
- *Latina: 38*

### "November 2009 Report

- *Total contacts: 326*
- *Twenty-one participants were tested for HIV in November.*
- *Total IDU (Injecting Drug User) contacts: 273*
- *Total unduplicated IDU contacts: 221*
- *Syringes: 2580*
- *Condoms distributed: Male- 2272, Female- 33, Dental Dams-34; Finger Cots-40*

### *Demographics of unduplicated IDU contacts:*

- *African American male: 32*

*We completed 278 referrals for various services.*

*This month, as a result of our 86 total [Drug & Alcohol] referrals, fourteen participants entered into drug treatment facilities. This indicates those of whom we are aware; there may be additional entries of which we are not aware."*

**Due to shortage of funding, only a small fraction of heroin addicts are served. Note that when addicts go untested they may inadvertently spread HIV/AIDS throughout the general population. Yes, that means our families!**

## McCasky sports up from last year

The School District of Lancaster has shown a jump in its athletic performance this fall. Out of 118 games played, McCasky sports teams won a total

of 43 games (with one tie). This amounts to a 36% win-rate—exceeding last year's rate of 30%.

**[Continued on back...]**

Jon Mitchell took the helm as Athletic Director last January after the district's athletic program had reached a demoralizing low. Since then, Mitchell and other athletic officials have been working to turn this record around.

When he spoke with *NewsLanc*, Mitchell was hesitant to claim credit for the improvement. "I think it's early enough in my tenure that I'm not sure how much impact I've had," Mitchell said, expressing hopes that this year will mark the beginning of a broad attitude change among the school's athletic programs.

## LETTER: Minimizing real estate tax loss

[In response to "City's Queen Street purchase will provide access to new garage"]

*"That building (424 N Queen) is much larger than its neighbors. If you're going to take a taxable property off the tax rolls, why not pick a smaller building? Most of those buildings would provide access."*

**NEW ERA:** An Editorial opines "Sprinkler systems are effective; no question about it. But their impact on the overall cost of the home cannot be overstated.

*"Besides, there is an alternative; the smoke detector. Working smoke detectors are nearly 100 percent effective in getting people out of burning homes alive, and they cost only a fraction of the cost of sprinkler systems."*

*"Kudos to the City for finally realizing that parking garages shouldn't take up the most valuable street frontage real estate. Every time I go past the Prince St Garage, Duke St Garage, or LGH Garage I cringe at the dead space."*

**WATCHDOG:** The problem is the substitution of 'engineered' floor trusses in place of the dimensional floor joists (2" x 10" or 2" x 12") used in older housing. These floor trusses are virtual kindling wood connected with metal clamps.

A small fire can enflame an entire home or apartment building within minutes. Under those conditions, warning from smoke detectors is inadequate...the savings on lumber justifies the money spent for a fire sprinkler system.

## Thousand dollar reward offered

Over the past year and a half, three of *NewsLanc*'s red newsletter circulation boxes have been stolen from the public sidewalks. The latest was situated in front of the Lancaster Theological Seminary across College Avenue from Franklin & Marshall College.

*NewsLanc* offers a thousand dollar reward for the arrest and conviction of the culprits on a felony charge.

Stealing the boxes isn't simply a crime against *NewsLanc*, it is a blow against the very essence of our democracy which permits and relies upon the right of free speech.

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