



- whether through MMAR or through illegal means the cost is prohibitive
- unwillingness of family doctors in the area to fill out the physician's section of the MMAR application.
- Sixty percent of RHAC clients using medicinal marijuana obtain their supply from the local compassion centre, technically an illegal operation, which requires a letter from the individual's doctor, technically an illegal action. The remaining 20% of RHAC clients obtain their marijuana on the black market. (4)

The Regional HIV/AIDS Connection has drafted a position statement on the use of cannabis for medicinal use because seriously ill people, including those with HIV, have a constitutional right to use cannabis as part of their therapy, but often cannot exercise this right due to numerous barriers preventing legal access.

## **POSITION STATEMENT**

The Regional HIV/AIDS Connection advocates:

- For HIV+ individuals to make informed choices, based on harm reduction principles, by having access to appropriate information and services related to the legal use of cannabis for medicinal purposes
- for Health Canada to reduce barriers to access of the federal medical cannabis program
- for HIV+ individuals to have the right to access a legal, safe, reliable and affordable source of cannabis
- for extensive clinical research, approved by Health Canada, to be conducted regarding the potential benefits and/or risks of long term use of cannabis by HIV+ individuals. This research must involve the greater community including but not limited to HIV+ individuals who use cannabis for medicinal purposes, compassion centers, and the Canadian Medical Association.

(1) Canadian AIDS Society. Cannabis as Therapy for People Living with HIV/AIDS: "Our Right, Our Choice, pg. 18

(2) Ibid., pg.32

(3) Ibid., pg. 36

(4) AIDS Committee of London, client focus group, 2005