Medical Marijuana:
What do medical experts say?

American Nurses Association
"The evidence demonstrates a connection between therapeutic use of marijuana and symptom relief. The American Nurses Association actively supports patients' rights to legally and safely utilize marijuana for symptom management and health care practitioners' efforts to promote quality of life for patients needing such therapy."
Source: "In Support of Patients' Safe Access to Therapeutic Marijuana," ANA Board of Directors (Silver Spring, MD: American Nurses Association, December 12, 2008), pp. 3-4

Former Chief Administrative Law Judge at the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Francis Young
The evidence in this record [9-6-88 ruling] clearly shows that marijuana has been accepted as capable of relieving the distress of great numbers of very ill people, and doing so with safety under medical supervision. It would be unreasonable, arbitrary and capricious for DEA to continue to stand between those sufferers and the benefits of this substance in light of the evidence in this record. The record here establishes conclusively that at least 'a respectable minority' of physicians has 'accepted' marijuana as having a 'medical use in treatment in the United States.' That the others [physicians] may not makes no difference... Nothing more can reasonably be required. That some doctors would have more studies and test results in hand before accepting marijuana's usefulness here is irrelevant."

New England Journal of Medicine (Editorial)
"[A] federal policy that prohibits physicians from alleviating suffering by prescribing marijuana for seriously ill patients is misguided, heavy-handed, and inhumane... It is also hypocritical to forbid physicians to prescribe marijuana while permitting them to use morphine and meperidine to relieve extreme dyspnea and pain. With both these drugs the difference between the dose that relieves symptoms and the dose that hastens death is very narrow; by contrast, there is no risk of death from smoking marijuana.”

American College of Physicians
"Evidence not only supports the use of medical marijuana in certain conditions but also suggests numerous indications for cannabinoids. Additional research is needed to further clarify the therapeutic value of cannabinoids and determine optimal routes of administration. The science on medical marijuana should not be obscured or hindered by the debate surrounding the legalization of marijuana for general use."
American Academy of HIV Medicine
"When appropriately prescribed and monitored, marijuana/cannabis can provide immeasurable benefits for the health and well-being of our patients ... We support state and federal legislation not only to remove criminal penalties associated with medical marijuana, but further to exclude marijuana/cannabis from classification as a Schedule I drug."
Source: American Academy of HIV Medicine, letter to NY Assemblyman Richard Gottfried, November 11, 2003

Former U.S. Surgeon General, Joycelyn Elders, MD
“The evidence is overwhelming that marijuana can relieve certain types of pain, nausea, vomiting and other symptoms caused by illnesses like multiple sclerosis, cancer and AIDS — or by the harsh drugs sometimes used to treat them. And it can do so with remarkable safety. Indeed, marijuana is less toxic than many of the drugs that physicians prescribe every day.”

Institute of Medicine
In 1999, the Congressionally chartered Institute of Medicine (IOM), part of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), did the most extensive review of the medical literature on marijuana to date and concluded that “[t]he accumulated data indicate a potential therapeutic value for cannabinoid drugs, particularly for symptoms such as pain relief, control of nausea and vomiting, and appetite stimulation.” They also concluded there was “substantial consensus among experts in the relevant disciplines on the scientific evidence about potential medical uses of marijuana.”

HIV Medicine Association of the Infectious Diseases Society of America
American Medical Students Association
Lymphoma Foundation of America
"[I]t cannot seriously be contested that there exists a small but significant class of individuals who suffer from painful chronic, degenerative, and terminal conditions, for whom marijuana provides uniquely effective relief.”
Source: Amicus Curiae brief filed in the U.S. Supreme Court (in the case of Gonzales v. Raich), October 2004

British Medical Association
"Present evidence indicates that [cannabinoids] are remarkably safe drugs, with a side-effects profile superior to many drugs used for the same indications..."
Source: BMA report: "Therapeutic Uses of Cannabis:" November 1997

American Association of Public Health
• Encourages research of the therapeutic properties of various cannabinoids and combinations of cannabinoids.
• Encourages research on alternative methods of administration to decrease the harmful effects related to smoking; and
• Urges the Administration and Congress to move expeditiously to make cannabis available as a legal medicine where shown to be safe and effective and to immediately allow access to therapeutic cannabis through the Investigational New Drug Program.”