Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies, Inc.

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A NEW ERA in psychedelic research is dawning. According to Corinne Moody, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) consumer safety officer, "I think the FDA is beginning to look at [psychedelic drug research] as a means of helping people". For the first time since MDMA was classified as a controlled substance in 1985, it is now possible for psychiatrists working with MAPS to obtain FDA approval to administer MDMA to research subjects. This historic opportunity is a direct result of the recommendations of the FDA's Drug Abuse Advisory Committee, which met on July 15, 1992. The committee reviewed policies toward "hallucinogenic" research in general as well as UC Irvine psychiatrist Dr. Charles Grob's application to study MDMA in the treatment of pain and distress in end-stage pancreatic cancer patients (full report on p. 2-6).

In the weeks leading up to the FDA meeting, MAPS coordinated a written response to the FDA's preliminary critique of Dr. Grob's protocol. In addition, MAPS sponsored a unique seminar on the challenges of working with terminally ill patients using psychedelics (full report on p. 8-10). The seminar took place in Prague prior to the International Transpersonal Psychology conference, at which MAPS helped organize three panel discussions on psychedelics (full report on p. 10-12).

Currently, MAPS is assisting Dr. Grob in working with the FDA to finalize the experimental design for his MDMA research. MAPS is also helping Russian researchers secure permission from their Pharmacological Committee to investigate the use of MDMA in the treatment of alcoholism (related story p.14–16). Similarly, MAPS is acting as a resource to Swiss psychedelic researchers in their negotiations on protocol design with the Swiss Health Authorities (story on p. 13). MAPS must now turn its attention to fundraising if it is to meet these new opportunities and challenges (see MAPS' financial statement on p. 21).

On a personal note, the new opportunities to conduct FDA-approved psychedelic research have convinced me to change my career plans. Though I was recently admitted to the Ph.D. program in Public Policy at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, I have taken at least a one year leave of absence in order to concentrate fully on MAPS and its mission. Now that the FDA has challenged us to prove our claims about MDMA's therapeutic value, it's time to begin. With your generous help — without which the research will not be able to move forward — MAPS can continue to contribute to our society's understanding of the nature and value of psychedelic experiences, of their risks and benefits, and of the ways they might successfully be integrated into our culture and regulated by our laws.

Rick Doblin, MAPS President