

SEVERAL important regulatory decisions will be made this Fall that will profoundly impact MAPS' efforts to catalyze research with psychedelic drugs and marijuana.

We expect the FDA to respond soon regarding the third draft of the MAPS-supported MDMA research protocol submitted on July 25, 1998 by Charles Grob, M.D. and Russell Poland, Ph.D., Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. The protocol is for an experiment designed to administer MDMA to breast cancer patients in a dose-response study. The study will primarily investigate issues related to the safety of administering MDMA to breast cancer patients. Preliminary information will also be gathered about possible long-term changes in levels of anxiety and depression related to a diagnosis of cancer. These psychological changes will be the focus of any future efficacy studies, assuming the safety issues can be adequately resolved. We anticipate that this protocol will become the first FDA-approved study of MDMA in a patient population.

Letter from Rick Doblin, MAPS President

In October, 1998 the National Institutes of Health will complete the review of a MAPS-supported grant application for the study of marijuana in patients whose migraines require a visit to the emergency room. The grant application was submitted earlier this year by Ethan Russo, M.D., University of Montana. Dr. Russo's grant application is the second he has submitted to NIH; the first was rejected. As far as we know, Dr. Russo is the only researcher in the U.S. currently seeking approval for a study of any medical use of marijuana in a patient population. Unfortunately, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), which has a monopoly on the supply of marijuana legal for FDA-approved research, continues to impose excessive restrictions on all medical marijuana research proposals. NIDA's policies prohibit all privately-funded projects from receiving supplies of marijuana and require government funding before any medical marijuana project can go forward. Needless to say, obtaining government funding for medical marijuana research is no easy task. It can be done, however, as MAPS and Donald Abrams, M.D., UC San Francisco, have demonstrated. Dr. Abrams has published an article about our struggle to obtain permission for his study; (Abrams D, Medical Marijuana—Tribulations and Trials. *J of Psychoactive Drugs*, 30(2), 163:169. April-June 1998.) Dr. Abrams is currently treating patients in his study, the first to evaluate the medical use of marijuana in a patient population in fifteen years.

Data analysis will soon be completed on a major research project supported by MAPS, the 35- to 42-year follow-up study of the pioneering LSD research of Dr. Oscar Janiger. A positive and lengthy cover article about the follow-up study appeared in the July 2, 1998 issue of *LA Weekly* and was reprinted in other weekly papers. The article is available on the Internet at www.laweekly.com in the archive section. The next big issue of the *MAPS Bulletin* will feature a complete report on the results of this follow-up study.

In Israel, Moshe Kotler, M.D., Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, is in the midst of the protocol design process for a MAPS-funded project intended to investigate the use of MDMA in the treatment of patients with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

In the Netherlands, a preliminary report by Nicole Maalsté and Hans Ossebaard, Utrecht University, is expected soon regarding their MAPS-supported follow-up study of Dr. Jan Bastiaans' LSD therapy in the psychological treatment of concentration camp survivors.

One personal note—My wife, Lynne, and I are expecting our third child in mid-November. For those looking for evidence of brain damage as a result of my prior use of psychedelics, the conscious decision to add yet another element of chaos to our lives may be it. Yet we look forward to new life with enthusiasm and exhaustion.

Best wishes, Rick Doblin, MAPS President