

## M.D.'s Protest Control of MDMA

A group of psychiatrists are protesting the government's tight control over MDMA, a psychotropic drug whose street name is "ecstasy."

In a letter sent to Representatives William J. Hughes (D-N.J.), Henry Waxman (D-Calif.), and John Dingell (D-Mich.), and Senators Paul Laxalt (R-Nev.) and Paula Hawkins (R-Fla.), the psychiatrists say that the July 1 action by the Drug Enforcement Agency placing MDMA into Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act was an abuse of the agency's emergency scheduling power.

"We believe that MDMA is a potentially valuable drug and that research into its therapeutic use should be facilitated, not discouraged," Lester Grinspoon, George Greer, Joseph Downing, Richard Ingrasci, Robert Lynch, Richard Strassman, and Philip Wolfson were reported by *American Medical News* to have said in the letter. They criticized the scientific basis for the DEA action. None of the studies on which the action was based involved MDMA, but a similar drug, MDA. Also, the studies analyzed the effects of high-dose intravenous injection, not the lower-dose oral administration normally ingested, the psychiatrists said.

The emergency ban is effective for one year (*Psychiatric News*, June 21). Hearings held this summer in Los Angeles, Kansas City, and Washington, D.C., will determine whether the drug should be permanently reclassified.