



MAPS

Bulletin of the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies

MAKING HISTORY IN SLOW MOTION; that describes MAPS these days. Most MAPS projects take years to develop, but eventually, some of them cross a threshold and become approved. On February 7, 2000, the Spanish Ministry of Health officially approved Jose Carlos Bouso's MAPS-supported study of the use of MDMA in the treatment of women suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a result of sexual assault (p. 2). This experiment will be the first controlled, scientific study of the safety and efficacy of MDMA in a patient population ever conducted. MAPS and Bouso have worked together since 1997 to obtain approval for this project. MAPS has pledged \$54,000 for it, half of which must still be raised. The approval of this protocol has transformed

Letter from Rick Doblin, MAPS President

the goal of developing MDMA into a prescription medicine from a tantalizing mirage into a real possibility, a hard-won and profoundly satisfying transition. ■ The three year period that MAPS and Jose Carlos Bouso have worked together to obtain approval for his study is short, comparatively. MAPS' effort to initiate MDMA psychotherapy research began fourteen years ago when MAPS was founded in 1986. We have worked since 1991 with Dr. Charles Grob, Harbor-UCLA, in the effort to obtain US permission to study the use of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy in the psychotherapeutic treatment of cancer patients. Protocol development is currently in process for Dr. Grob's project, as well as for the MDMA/PTSD project in Israel that MAPS has been working to start since early 1998, in association with Dr. Moshe Kotler and Dr. Adam Darnell, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. MAPS is now developing a Clinical Plan that outlines the sequence of studies that will be needed to evaluate whether MDMA can be proven safe and beneficial for one clinical indication. MAPS is preparing to embark on a major fund-raising effort since this plan will cost \$2 million to implement. As always, we will move slowly in small steps, as funding and permission allow. ■ From an historical perspective, MAPS' effort to seek permission from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to establish a medical marijuana production facility will, if successful, become the first non-governmental source of marijuana for legal research since marijuana was removed from the US Formulary in 1941. Needless to say, it may take a few years to obtain permission for the facility. Plans are for it to be managed under contract from MAPS by the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, University of Massachusetts, Amherst (p. 5). ■ In mid-2000, Dr. Donald Abrams, UC San Francisco, will complete his NIDA-funded research into the effects of the use of marijuana in AIDS patients. MAPS and Dr. Abrams worked together for six years to start this project, the first FDA-approved study of marijuana in a patient population since the early 1980s (see www.maps.org/mmj/). ■ These milestones are simply punctuation marks in longer-term efforts that span years and careers, decades and lifetimes. As a result of the continued partnership between MAPS' staff, members, pioneering scientists, courageous educators, and responsible regulators, there are tentative but vital signs that scientific exploration with psychedelics and marijuana will be permitted to flower. Through this research, we will learn more of the nature and possibilities of the human mind, body and spirit. In 2000, physicists around the world are exploring the inner workings of matter with ever more expensive and effective tools. Astronomers are searching the outer limits of space with billion dollar orbiting space telescopes. Join with us as we struggle to support psychedelic and marijuana research in order to make our small but unique contribution to the understanding of the mysteries at the center of us all. ■ Rick Doblin, MAPS President