

From the Desk of Rick Doblin, Ph.D.

TIME MARCHES ON. THIS YEAR-END issue of the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS) *Bulletin* contains the Annual Report for our 28th year, marking a period of time that astonishes even me. Over this time our network of supporters has expanded remarkably. It is a pleasure to work with such an ever-broadening array of extraordinary people, including consultants who formerly worked for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

It is also a pleasure, and a profound relief, to witness our culture becoming increasingly disenchanted with prohibition and open to the healing and spiritual potential of non-ordinary states of consciousness. This change, which MAPS and many other organizations and people have worked to make possible, is evidenced by the November 2014 legalization of marijuana in Alaska, Oregon, and the District of Columbia; the approval of medical marijuana in Guam; the near-approval of medical marijuana in Florida (58% voted in favor, but 60% was required for passage of the constitutional amendment); and the passage of California's Prop. 47, which not only reduced many drug crimes from felonies to misdemeanors, but also retroactively reduced sentences of people convicted under prior laws.

As we glimpse 2015 on the near horizon, we can clearly see that opportunity abounds. Foremost among these opportunities is that MAPS is working to develop collaborative MDMA-assisted psychotherapy for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) research with scientists affiliated with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' National Center for PTSD. This collaboration is a legacy of Dr. Richard Rockefeller's work to open doors previously blocked to MAPS for over 25 years.

By the middle of 2015, MAPS will complete our Phase 2 MDMA-assisted psychotherapy for PTSD studies (maps.org/mdma), with about 90 subjects treated and enough data gathered to schedule our End of Phase 2 meeting with the FDA and plan our multisite Phase 3 studies. Additionally, next year we will complete our initial Phase 2 pilot study of MDMA-assisted therapy for autistic adults with social anxiety, and will begin our new Phase 2 study of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy for anxiety associated with life-threatening illness.

Next year, there is a good chance that we will even be able to start our study of marijuana for symptoms of PTSD in U.S. veterans (maps.org/mmj)! Our protocol has been approved by the FDA, and the Public Health Service (PHS) has approved our request to purchase marijuana from the monopoly supply of DEA-licensed marijuana held by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). However, at the moment we are still waiting for

NIDA to grow marijuana with sufficient ratios of cannabidiol (CBD) and tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) as required for our protocol. This failure to provide marijuana for researchers on a timely basis is further evidence that NIDA is behind the curve by at least a decade when it comes to recognizing the scientific and medical importance of CBD. In 2015, we can expect that MAPS' efforts to end the obstructive PHS protocol review process for privately-funded medical marijuana drug development research—and to end the NIDA monopoly—will gain traction, though when those reforms will actually be implemented is still too difficult to tell.

We also have new opportunities to expand MAPS' psychedelic harm reduction program (maps.org/zendo). We're now helping to build a growing political coalition to amend the Rave Act, which criminalized harm reduction efforts by festival organizers and club owners, intentionally and perversely increasing risks for those choosing to use drugs at those venues and contributing to the tragic increase in recreational drug-related deaths in 2014.

MAPS' public education efforts are continuing to expand, as major media outlets are increasingly open to balanced reporting of psychedelics and to portraying the positive aspects of psychedelics and marijuana in popular entertainment. As I write today, *The Washington Post* is publishing a lengthy series of excerpts from Tom Shroder's *Acid Test: LSD, Ecstasy and the Power to Heal*, positively educating politicians and others in the heart of the establishment about the therapeutic and scientific potential of psychedelics. In other media, a recent episode of *Transparent*, a new dramatic series created by Amazon (whose founder owns *The Washington Post*), even includes a scene where a character mentions that the government is giving MDMA to soldiers to help cure PTSD!

Together, we can develop psychedelics and marijuana into prescription medicines approved by the FDA and European Medicines Agency, transforming our culture into a healthier, more spiritual, more sustainable one. All that is necessary is for each of us to do what we can to support MAPS' research. Onward to 2015!



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