

OHIO PATIENT NETWORK

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**SUBJECT: OHIO PATIENT NETWORK TO HOLD ANNUAL MEETING IN WESTERVILLE
Symbolic Act to Demonstrate Harm of Medicinal Cannabis Prohibition in the ‘Seat of Prohibition’**

(Columbus, OH) The Ohio Patient Network and sister Ohio Patient Action Network will hold their Annual Meetings on Sunday, October 22nd, at the Westerville Public Library in Westerville, Ohio. The time will be 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm.

Holding the Annual Meeting in Westerville, the ‘seat of prohibition’, represents a symbolic act by OPN to highlight the damage prohibition has wreaked on the most vulnerable citizens in our community. Every week, science discovers new benefits for cannabis, aka marijuana. It has been found to be effective as an anti-emetic for chemotherapy, an anti-spasmodic for multiple sclerosis, a neuroprotectant for head injury, and even a potential anti-cancer agent.

Yet, both the use and possession of this beneficial plant is illegal, subjecting patients to fines, loss of employment, prison, and even rejection from organ transplant lists. This is a social injustice probably never envisioned by the purveyors of alcohol prohibition in Westerville a century ago.

Westerville became the home of the Anti-Saloon League in 1909, almost 100 years ago. The League served as the PR muscle that helped pass the 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibiting alcohol and beginning the concept of prohibition as practiced today with cannabis.

Even though the League was anti-alcohol, there is no evidence that they would be anti-cannabis, given the growing body of knowledge about the plant. After the passage of the 18th Amendment, a rift grew in the Anti-Saloon League between leaders who believed that education could solve the problem versus those who asserted that law enforcement was the answer. The law enforcement approach to drug control has ruled ever since.

However, the League was also founded by Methodist ministers. Today, numerous religious denominations have called not only for more humane, educationally-based drug policies; many are also on record as endorsing medical marijuana. United Church of Christ, the Union for Reform Judaism, the Episcopal Church, and both the United Methodist Church and the United Methodist Board of Church and Society have all signed a statement supporting medicinal cannabis patients and their physicians.

In honor of the church’s role in bringing justice to this issue, the theme of this year’s OPN Annual Meeting will be, “Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother.” (Zechariah 7:9) A drawing by an OPN member displaying this quote will be on display for the meeting.

The League became defunct in the late 1940s, and their main headquarters (a brick house), along with an extensive archive, was donated to the Westerville Public Library in the 1970s. The two are now adjoined. Further, Westerville precincts that were once ‘dry’ now allow alcohol consumption and sale, with three such initiatives on the ballot this fall.

The Ohio Patient Network (OPN) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit coalition of patients, caregivers, medical professionals, concerned citizens, and organizations who support the compassionate use of cannabis for various medicinal purposes. Information about OPN can be found at <http://www.ohiopatient.net>. The Ohio Patient Action Network was formed to lobby for medicinal cannabis legislation. Its Website is <http://ohiopatientaction.org>.

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