

Post pot ads irresponsible

Posted by Chris Thurstone
DrThurstone.com | August 6, 2014

News organizations running ads that promote the use of cannabis for the treatment of serious medical conditions are acting irresponsibly — and that is an understatement. Please see the following letter sent to Greg Moore, editor-in-chief of *The Denver Post*, and Ricardo Baca, editor of the news organization’s online marijuana section — known as “The Cannabist.”

Greg Moore, Editor
The Denver Post

Ricardo Baca, Editor
The Cannabist

Dear Mr. Moore and Mr. Baca,

We are writing to express serious concerns regarding *The Denver Post’s* The Cannabist website’s recommendations of various marijuana strains to “treat” mental illnesses, including attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), bipolar disorder, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). We are writing as concerned professionals with extensive experience in mental health treatment, medicine, and/or public health.

The Denver Post’s website provides information from Leafly.com listing 92 Colorado-specific strains of marijuana with 88 claimed to treat depression, 25 to treat PTSD, 23 for bipolar and 40 for ADHD (see attached document assembled by Bob Doyle, chairman of Colorado SAM (Smart Approaches to Marijuana) Coalition). And a few strains are noted to treat cancer. The improper treatment or delay in effective treatment of mental health issues and major psychiatric illnesses can exacerbate the problem and could lead to additional harm to the patient and/or those around them.

In light of the serious potential impact of your recommendations, including possible delay in medical treatment for serious and potentially life-threatening mental illnesses, and the potential for worsening of those illnesses by the marijuana you recommend, **we request** that you release the data upon which these recommendations for dispensing the **specific marijuana strains** as a treatment for bipolar disorder, PTSD, ADHD and depression are based. We are sending a copy of this letter to medical authorities with knowledge of science and regulatory policies and procedures.

The absence of critical information on the website for those accepting your advice to use the various marijuana strains is alarming and demonstrates a failure to appreciate the potential implications of your protocol. **For each of the strains**, we request to know the recommended dosage, duration, the THC and CBD content, whether you’re recommending they be used with or

without FDA-approved medication or behavioral treatment for the condition, what contraindications are known and whether other physical or mental health issues should preclude certain people from using the strain.

We look forward to your prompt reply given the seriousness of the claims on your website and their potential negative impact on serious psychiatric conditions your website claims will be “treated” by particular strains of marijuana.

Sincerely,

Bob Doyle

Chair, Colorado SAM (Smart Approaches to Marijuana) Coalition

Christian Thurstone, M.D.

General, child and addiction psychiatrist

A. Eden Evins, M.D., M.P.H.

Associate Professor of Psychiatry

Harvard Medical School

Director, Center for Addiction Medicine

Massachusetts General Hospital