

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Ben Livingston, Media Liaison, 206-335-9214, media2008@cdc.coop

"Potline" launched in Washington State

Nonprofit will assist medical-marijuana patients wrongly charged with drug offenses

SEATTLE , AUGUST 7, 2008 — An activist group announced a toll-free hotline today for citizens to report medical-marijuana arrests and prosecutions in Washington State. Called the "Washington State Potline," the program seeks to collect data on law-enforcement compliance with the state's medical marijuana law and hold accountable agencies that violate the spirit of the state's medical use of marijuana act.

The Seattle-based Cannabis Defense Coalition set up the hotline in response to what members say is increased hostility towards medical-marijuana patients in Washington State. "In some counties, police tell patients our medical marijuana law does not even exist," says Ric Smith, a spokesperson for the group and authorized patient. Smith is a cancer survivor and AIDS patient who uses marijuana, as authorized by state law, to relieve his suffering. "Police and prosecutors must be educated about our medical marijuana law, and be held to it," he says.

Despite Washington's medical marijuana law, passed by 59 percent of voters in 1998, police can arrest anyone in possession of marijuana, requiring authorized patients to present their defense in court. Smith says the group will send legal observers to medical-marijuana trials, and they hope to learn about such trials from public tips.

Callers to the Washington State Potline may access information about Washington's medical marijuana law, upcoming events or court appearances, and an attorney referral service. The hotline is staffed by volunteers weekdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Recorded information will be available from the Washington State Potline 24 hours a day at (888) 208-5332.

The Cannabis Defense Coalition, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit member cooperative, advocates sensible, science-based drug policy. More information is available at www.cdc.coop.

###