

When is a controlled substance a medicine?



The Opium Example

Heroin comes from the opium plant.

Medicines have been developed from the opium plant but we don't call them "medical heroin."

We call them morphine, Demerol®, Percocet® and other names.

These medicines have been approved as safe and effective by FDA to treat moderate to severe pain.

Doctors prescribe them and pharmacies sell them.

They did not have to be legalized.

Heroin is not medical.



The Cannabis Example

Marijuana comes from the cannabis plant.

Medicines have been developed from the cannabis plant but we don't call them "medical marijuana."

We call them Marinol® and Cesamet®.

These medicines have been approved as safe and effective by FDA to treat nausea and wasting in cancer and AIDS patients.

Doctors prescribe them and pharmacies sell them.

They did not have to be legalized.

Marijuana is not medical.



Other medicines are being developed from the cannabis plant but we don't call them "medical marijuana."

We call them Sativex® and Epidiolex®.

These medicines are in clinical trials for FDA approval to treat cancer pain and epileptic seizures.

During clinical trials, patients can obtain them through FDA expanded access programs.

If these medicines meet safety and efficacy tests, FDA will approve them.

Doctors will be able to prescribe them and pharmacies will be able to sell them.

They will not have to be legalized.

Marijuana is not medical.