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Feds Should Work With—Not Against—States That Legalize Psychedelics, Government Health Official Says



Published 1 month ago on June 2, 2021

By **Kyle Jaeger** 



 Oregon’s move to legalize psilocybin mushrooms for therapeutic use should signal to federal government that it needs to engage with jurisdictions that pursue such reform in the development of regulatory frameworks, a federal health official says.



During a speakers series hosted by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Sean Belo senior science policy advisor with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), discussed “compelling” research into psychedelics and the importance of federal involvement as local policies change, regardless of the illegality of substances under federal statute.

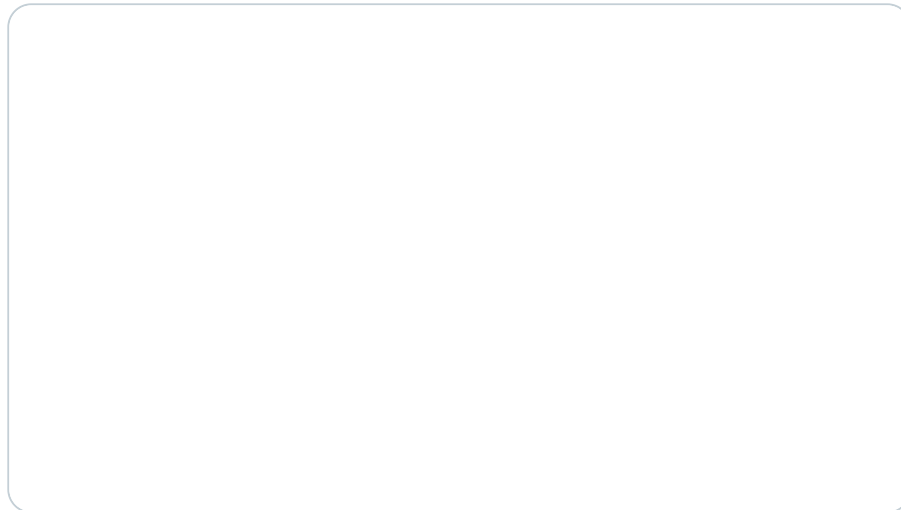
“Many of the safety and ethical considerations” of psychedelics reform “will rapidly be front-and-center regulatory and policy issues for states and municipalities who are debating or passing initiatives that decriminalize and medicalize psychedelics, particularly in plant form,” he said.



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#NIH is sponsoring a series of virtual lectures on psilocybin, a natural compound from fungi that is converted in the body to a hallucinogenic substance. Psilocybin is being studied to see if it may help in treating severe psychiatric disorders. bit.ly/2QLFbwG



10:47 AM · May 25, 2021



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“The state of Oregon has explicitly stated in their initiative, recently approved by the electorate, that psychotherapy facilitated by psilocybin mushrooms will have protect state law,” Belouin, who is also a captain with the U.S Public Health Service, said. “Kt this, the federal government must consider engaging states and municipalities that a actively pursuing, or who have already passed ballot initiatives, to medicalize and decriminalize psychedelics.”

Oregon voters overwhelmingly approved a ballot measure last year to create a first-of program where people can be treated with psilocybin in a clinical setting. In March, (Brown (D) appointed an advisory board that will help facilitate the implementation c initiative.

The recommendation for the U.S. government to actively engage with jurisdictions th implementing psychedelics reform measures is notable coming from an official who represents a federal health agency.

Belouin went on to say that “dovetailing with the battery of safety and ethical considerations with psychedelics are a series of issues being raised and debated, given the rapid rise in interest by many venture capital-funded entities entering the marketplace.”

One of the main issues in that respect is the prospect of companies pursuing patents for certain psychedelic treatments, he said, noting that this trend means “the federal government, state boards and stakeholders will need to address the issue.”

“Everyone’s state regulatory agencies will need to collaborate with stakeholders on how to eliminate disparity, thus ensuring equitable access of psychedelic therapy for all patients regardless of income status, insurance plans, no insurance or other disparity-limiting factors,” he said. “Everyone’s state regulators will need to engage medical stakeholders in consultation with non-profit, non-medical stakeholders who may seek to be involved in providing the service.”

Another interesting component of the [speech](#) concerned ongoing clinical trials into psychedelics like psilocybin and MDMA.

While the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has granted the substances special status to expedite research into their therapeutic potential for certain conditions, Belouin said that should not be construed that a drug will ultimately be FDA-approved for that indication.

The official’s comments on both the therapeutic potential of psychedelics and the need for federal engagement are notable, but they also reflect something of a theme.

For example, experts who [spoke at NIH’s initial psilocybin speakers series event](#) in April at the Marijuana Moment that federal drug laws are out of step with voters and undermine the research objectives of the scientific community.

Also, NIH Director Francis Collins recently [touted the therapeutic potential of psychedelics](#) like psilocybin and MDMA at a Senate hearing, and he also slammed ongoing federal restrictions that are inhibiting research into marijuana.

“There has been a resurgence of interest in psychedelic drugs, which for a while were considered not an area that researchers legitimately ought to go after,” Collins told lawmakers. “And I think as we’ve learned more about how the brain works, we’ve begun to realize that these are potential tools for research purposes and might be clinically beneficial.”

The speakers series comes as multiple states and localities pursue psychedelics reform.

For instance, a New York lawmaker introduced a bill on Tuesday that would require the state to establish an institute to [research the therapeutic potential of psychedelics](#).

In Texas, legislators recently sent a bill to similarly [require the state to study the therapeutic potential of psychedelics](#) to their governor’s desk.

The California Senate on Tuesday approved a bill that would [legalize the possession of psychedelics](#), including LSD, DMT and ibogaine.

New York Bill Would Create State-Sponsored Psychedelics Research Institute

A New York lawmaker introduced a bill on Tuesday that would require the state to establish an institute to research the therapeutic potential of psychedelics. The legislation, sponsored by Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal (D), would create a state-sanctioned research institute to explore the therapeutic potential of certain psychedelics and also require regulators to issue recommendations on ... Continue reading



Image courtesy of [Kristie Gianopulos](#).

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Kyle Jaeger is Marijuana Moment's Sacramento-based senior editor. His work has also appeared in High VICE and attn.

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Top U.S. Sports Regulator Says Marijuana Policy 'Must Change' As White House

Pursues Global Meeting



Published 3 hours ago on July 9, 2021

By **Kyle Jaeger** 



The rules on marijuana for international athletes “must change,” the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) said in a response letter to members of Congress on Friday following the suspension of runner Sha’Carri Richardson over a positive cannabis test. Separately, the White House is now reportedly seeking a meeting with international sports regulators to discuss the possibility of a policy change.

Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) and Jamie Raskin (D-MD) recently sent a letter to the U.S. athletics governing body on the penalty against Richardson, who admitted to using marijuana in a legal state after learning about her mother’s death. Earlier this week, USAF expressed sympathy for the runner and indicated that it may be time for a reevaluation of

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How U.S. Bullying In The 1990s Led To The Olympics Marijuana Ban Behind Richards Suspension



Published 6 hours ago on July 9, 2021

By Kyle Jaeger 



The suspension of U.S. runner Sha’Carri Richardson over a positive marijuana test has led many to call for changes to Olympics rules—with even President Joe Biden, top White Ho

officials and American sports regulators saying it might be time to reconsider punishing athletes for cannabis.

But how did the sports prohibition get imposed in the first place? Marijuana Moment spoke to the first president of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) to gain further insights into how the policy unfolded, which turns out to be the result of pressure from the U.S. itself.

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10 Senators Demand That Marijuana Businesses Be Allowed To Access Federal SBA Loans



Published 7 hours ago on July 9, 2021

By **Kyle Jaeger** 



A group of 10 senators recently sent a letter to Appropriations Committee leadership, requesting that language allowing marijuana businesses to access loans and other aid through the federal Small Business Administration (SBA) be included in an upcoming spending bill report.

The letter, led by Sen. Jacky Rosen (D-NV), describes the unique financial barriers that state legal cannabis companies face while marijuana remains federally illegal. The senators said freeing up SBA loans and disaster assistance for the industry is especially needed because funds “would fill gaps left by the private sector and help mitigate the effects of the COVID pandemic.”

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