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Florida A&M University and the Medical Marijuana Education and Research Initiative Announce Recipients of Medical Marijuana Research Grants

Tallahassee, Fla. – Florida A&M University (FAMU) today awarded 14 grants totaling \$98,000 to more than 20 faculty members to conduct research on marijuana, as it impacts diverse minority communities. This research is a component of the University’s Medical Marijuana Education and Research Initiative (MMERI), which was launched in response to the Florida Legislature’s funding allocation to educate “minorities about marijuana for medical use and the impact of the unlawful use of marijuana on minority communities.” As part of the 2017 legislation, FAMU receives \$10 for every \$75 identification card purchased by individuals approved to buy medical marijuana.

MMERI Director Peter Harris, JD. says, “when it comes to Florida’s diverse minority communities, this is a critical initiative. FAMU is unique in this space and our research will guide policy in Florida. We are fortunate that the Florida Legislature understands the vital role FAMU can play.”

MMERI Research Chair and Dean of the School of Allied Health Sciences, Cynthia Hughes-Harris, Ph.D. says, “As the use of both prescribed and illegal marijuana becomes more prevalent in our society, many questions have arisen as to how marijuana can and should be used. These questions are particularly important to marijuana use in minority communities. The primary approach to answering these questions is through formal research processes conducted by experienced researchers. FAMU is particularly qualified to address these issues due to the talents and skills of FAMU faculty, as researchers and as educators, combined with our understanding of the target communities throughout the state of Florida.”

This first round of research funding will enable FAMU to build a repository of information for medical marijuana education and research. Among the objectives of the repository are to establish the University as a touchstone center for marijuana information, fill in the gaps in medical marijuana research particularly as it relates to diverse communities and to inform public policy, in Florida and beyond, about the impact and issues presented by the developing marijuana industry.

Faculty members from such disciplines as agriculture, allied health, architecture, law, pharmacy, business, and social sciences will conduct funded research. The grantees were selected by an impartial panel of experienced FAMU researchers and content experts who rated each application on objective criteria appropriate to the goals of the grant. Each grant award is \$7,000. The research projects are expected to be completed by June 30, 2020.

The research focus and the awardees are:

- *Knowledge and Perception of Pediatric Cancer Patients and Caregivers on Medical Marijuana*, Aksal Ali, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, College of Pharmacy.
- *Assessing Disparate Impacts: The Legalization of Medical Marijuana in Florida and the Legal Implications for Florida’s African American Communities*, Jeffrey Brown, J.D., Associate Professor, College of Law.

- *Marijuana, Mental Health, and FAMU*, DeAnna Burney, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Psychology and Huijin Li, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Assistant Director, Center for Ethnic Psychological Research and Application, Department of Psychology.
- *Medical Marijuana Dispensary Locations and Neighborhood Crime*, Andrew Chin, Interim Dean, School of Architecture and Engineering Technology.
- *Exploring Black Entrepreneurs' Access to Opportunities in the Medical Marijuana Industry*, Jennifer Collins, Ph.D., Assistant Dean and Associate Professor, School of Business and Industry and LaTanya White, MBA, Instructor, School of Business and Industry.
- *The Effects of Medical Marijuana Use by Multiple Sclerosis Patients on Select Measures of Muscular Strength and Endurance*, Dr. Brian Hickey, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Health and Physical Education.
- *Assessing the Knowledge and Perceptions of Community Members Specific to the Compassionate Use of Marijuana*, Marisa Lewis, Pharm.D., MPH, Associate Professor, School of Allied Health Sciences and Lon'Tejuana Cooper, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, School of Allied Health Sciences.
- *Mixed Methods Study of Medical Marijuana Use Among Minority Patients*, John Luque, Ph.D., MPH, Associate Professor, College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences and Arinzechukwu Okere, PharmD, MS, MBA, BPCS, Associate Professor, College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences.
- *Assessing African Americans Preference and Willingness to Pay Values for Medical Marijuana as a Treatment for Cancer...a Minority Perspective*, Carmen Lyttle-Nguessa, Ph.D., College of Agriculture and Food Sciences, Gilbert Queely, Ph.D., Research Associate, College of Agriculture and Food Sciences and Cassel Gardner, Ph.D., Professor, College of Agriculture and Food Sciences.
- *Increasing Minority Access to Medical Marijuana (MM): Simplifying the Process Through Research, Outreach, and Education*, Gilbert Queely, Ph.D., Research Associate, College of Agriculture and Food Sciences
- *An Investigation on Marijuana Consumption in the Construction Industry in Florida*, Behnam Shadravan, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, School of Architecture and Engineering Technology
- *To What Extent Do Mental Health and Psychosocial Factors Predict Risk for Misuse and Neuropsychological Impairment in African American Marijuana Users?*, Gwendolyn Singleton, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Psychology.
- *Marijuana Wellness Intervention for Community, Coping, Substance-Awareness, Self-Efficacy, and Self-Regulation Enhancement via Education*, Novell Tani, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology and Arie Christon, Department of Psychology.
- *Investigating Levels of Awareness of Medical Marijuana and the Correlation to Post Traumatic Stress Symptoms Within the Criminal Justice System*, Gari Tookes, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work.

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, founded on October 3, 1887, began classes with fifteen students and two instructors. Today, FAMU is one of 12 institutions in Florida's State University System and has nearly 10,000 students.

FAMU offers 54 bachelor's degrees, 29 master's degrees, 12 doctoral degrees and three professional degrees. The three professional degrees include the J.D., Pharm.D., and the Doctor of Physical Therapy. The 12 doctoral degree programs include 11 doctoral degrees and one Doctor of Public Health. The 11 doctoral programs are: biomedical engineering, chemical engineering, civil engineering, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, industrial engineering, pharmaceutical sciences, physics, educational leadership, environmental science and entomology. For more information, visit FAMU.edu.

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