

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 17, 2019

**FAMU Medical Marijuana Education and Research Initiative To Hold Community Forum at Melbourne Church**

**Tallahassee, Fla.** – Florida A&M University (FAMU) Medical Marijuana Education and Research Initiative (MMERI) has been invited by a Melbourne Pentecostal church to hold a community forum at a time usually reserved for Sunday service.

The community forum will be held at The MaxOut Church, 1106 W.H. Jackson St., Melbourne, Fla., 10:13 a.m. Sunday, October 20. The event will feature panelists with medical, political, law enforcement and social justice backgrounds. The forum is free and open to the public.

MaxOut Church pastor Leo Stoney said he invited MMERI to come and present information about medical marijuana and the impact of unlawful marijuana on Florida's diverse minority communities after being a panelist at MMERI's Orlando community forum. He saw how critical it was to bring this information to the public. Stoney said he believes in the power of education and awareness.

"I feel the faith-based community ought to be on the frontline empowering and engaging parishioners on topics that can affect them on a day-to-day basis," Stoney said. "While praying and believing is our goal, education is also part of the process."

MMERI Interim Executive Director Patricia Green-Powell, Ph.D., said the staff welcomes this kind of opportunity to reach the faith community.

"We work very hard to get this information out to the public and are grateful to be invited to MaxOut and bring a panel of experts sharing policies and best practices from their respective areas of expertise," Green-Powell said.

The MMERI forum provides residents with an opportunity to engage in a two-way conversation with community medical marijuana experts. Attendees will be able to ask questions and get answers from the diverse panel composed of:

**Patricia Green-Powell, Ph.D.**

FAMU Medical Marijuana Education and Research Initiative (MMERI)

**Valeria Robinson Baker, RPh, CPh**

Olympia Compounding

**Kenny Johnson**

Councilman, City of Palm Bay

**Marquis McKenzie**  
Florida Rights Restoration Coalition

**Bhavin Patel, MD**  
Affordable Care Clinics

Melbourne Police Department (Designee TBD)

FAMU's Medical Marijuana Education and Research Initiative (MMERI), 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.

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