

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 5, 2019

**Florida A&M University's Medical Marijuana Education and Research Initiative  
Announces Orlando Community Forum**

**Tallahassee, Fla.** – Florida A&M University (FAMU) 's Medical Marijuana Education and Research Initiative (MMERI) today announced the second community forum as the MMERI initiative traverses Florida to educate and inform Florida's diverse minority communities about medical marijuana. The forum will be held on Tuesday, June 11, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the auditorium at the Valencia College School of Public Safety, located at 8600 Valencia College Lane, Orlando, FL 32825.

The MMERI forums provide community members with an opportunity to engage in a two-way conversation with community medical marijuana stakeholders. Community members will be able to ask questions and get answers from the diverse panel composed of:

**Cynthia Hughes Harris, Ph.D.**

Research Chair, MMERI Initiative, and Dean, School of Allied Health Sciences  
Florida A&M University

**Representative Bruce Antone**

Florida House of Representatives

**Representative Carlos Guillermo Smith**

Florida House of Representatives

**Valeria Robinson Baker, RPh, C.Ph.**

Olympia Compounding Pharmacy

**Uday Daphtary, M.D.**

Affordable Care Clinics

**Mark Canty**

Undersheriff, Orange County Sheriff's Office

**Rev. Leo Stoney**

Pastor, The MaxOut Church

MMERI Director Peter Harris says, "it is critical that we hear directly and in-person from Florida's diverse minority communities so that we clearly understand their needs and concerns around medical marijuana. We are on an aggressive timeline to make sure that we hear the voices of interested Floridians as we work to inform legislation and other policies that will surely affect them."

MMERI forum organizer and Public Affairs Liaison Angela Hardiman adds, "Orlando is an important market for us because the community consists of so many diverse minority

groups. Our two-way communication methodology allows for the greatest exchange of information. We've heard from past forum attendees that are very appreciative of the opportunity to ask questions and get answers, and we are extending this model throughout the state.”

MMERI has several additional panels scheduled this summer.

<b>MMERI Event</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>
Community Forum	June 27, 2019	Tampa/St. Petersburg
Community Forum	July 9, 2019	Pensacola
Community Forum	July 18, 2019	Jacksonville
Community Forum	TBD	Palm Beach/Ft. Lauderdale
Community Forum	TBD	Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties

MMERI’s objective is to build a repository of research and other information for medical marijuana education and research scholars, to establish the University as a touchstone center for marijuana information, to fill in the gaps in medical marijuana research particularly as it relates to diverse communities and to inform public policy, in Florida and beyond. MMERI recently awarded 14 grants totaling \$98,000 to more than 20 faculty members to conduct research on marijuana, to enable FAMU’s MMERI to begin that process.

### ***About FAMU***

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, founded on October 3, 1887, began classes with 15 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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