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# PHYSICIANS

FORUM 2016

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Discussing Health & Social Justice Impact on the African American Community with Potential Legalization of Marijuana in California

**MARCH 11, 2016**

UC Davis School of Medicine, Sacramento, CA

PRESENTED BY: **sac cultural hub**  
Media Foundation

**UC DAVIS**  
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE



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## WELCOME MESSAGE from our Co-Presenting Sponsor Partner | 2016 Black Physicians Forum



**Dr. Darin Latimore**

Associate Dean of  
Medical and Resident  
Diversity, UC Davis  
School of Medicine  
2016 Forum Host &  
Advisory Committee  
Member

Welcome to the 6th Annual Northern California Black Physicians Forum at the UC Davis School of Medicine. We are so pleased that you have joined us for this important and informative event.

Once again, we have partnered with the Sac Cultural Hub to host an enjoyable gathering. This year, our dedicated team has developed an agenda that brings together experts who will help us focus on some of the most challenging health issues facing communities of color. We plan an informative session as well as an evening of terrific networking opportunities for meeting new people and exchanging new ideas.

This year's theme, "Discussing Health and Social Justice Impact on the African American Community with Potential Legalization of Marijuana in California," is an issue that every attendee needs to consider. Each of us has been affected to one degree or another by the so-called "War on Drugs." Now, with the rapidly growing acceptance of marijuana for both recreational and medical use, each of us must be able to provide thoughtful health-care leadership and expertise.

With esteemed colleague Dr. Tom Hopkins again serving as host and MC, we are very fortunate to have Dr. H. Westley Clark as our keynote speaker. Dr. Clark is the Dean's Executive Professor of Public Health at Santa Clara University and an internationally recognized expert on substance abuse. Our other distinguished speakers include Deborah Peterson Small from Break the Chains, Dr. Lakisha Jenkins from the Kiona T. Jenkins Foundation of Natural Health, and Alana Mathews, Public Adviser at the California Energy Commission and former Deputy District Attorney, Sacramento County District Attorney's office.

It gives me great pride to note that UC Davis Health System remains a recognized national leader in improving lives and transforming health care – a mission and accomplishment that are aligned with the goals of our Black Physicians Forum. From the emergency department and primary-care clinics to the classroom, research lab and executive boardroom, UC Davis is an institution that places a high priority on community partnerships and engagement to better address the health disparities that have disproportionately impacted the African American community for far too long.

However, consider the Forum to be more than just an issues-oriented endeavor and event. You should also find its welcoming and inclusive environment to be a place for lasting friendships and professional collaborations.

Thank you for joining us this year. Your commitment to our community helps build a legacy that will benefit people today and the generations to come.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Darin Latimore", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Darin Latimore



## Program Agenda | 2016 Black Physicians Forum

### Discussing Health & Social Justice Impact on the African American Community with Potential Legalization of Marijuana in California

**Friday, March 11, 2016 – 6:00 pm to 9:30 pm**

#### FORUM SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

UC Davis School of Medicine Education Building  
4610 X Street, Sacramento, CA 95817

- 6:00 PM REGISTRATION & RECEPTION**  
Networking & Exhibits, Catered Reception  
Interviews & Group/Individual Photos
- 6:30 PM WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS**  
**Pleshette Robertson**, CEO/Founder  
Sac Cultural Hub Media Company & Foundation
- Dr. Julie A. Freischlag, M.D.**, Vice Chancellor for Human Health Sciences and Dean of the School of Medicine at UC Davis
- Dr. Frederick J. Meyer, M.D., M.A.C.P.**, Vice Dean  
UC Davis School of Medicine
- 7:00 PM SPONSORSHIP REMARKS**
- 7:10pm Thomas Hopkins, M.D.** - Master of Ceremonies  
Internal Medicine, Former Chief Medical Correspondent for KRCA-3 in Sacramento
- 7:15 PM KEYNOTE PRESENTATION**  
**Dr. H. Westley Clark** - Dean's Executive Professor of Public Health  
Santa Clara University
- 8:15 PM PANEL PRESENTATION**  
**Deborah Peterson Small** - Executive Director Break the Chains
- Dr. Darin Latimore** - Associate Dean of Medical and Resident Diversity UC Davis School of Medicine
- Dr. Lakeisha Jenkins** - Founder and CEO  
The Kiona T. Jenkins Foundation of Natural Health
- Alana Mathews** - Public Adviser at the California Energy Commission – Former Deputy District Attorney, Sacramento County District Attorney's office 2004-2012
- 9:15 PM SCHOLARSHIP ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- 9:30 PM THANK YOU / CLOSING REMARKS**  
**Dr. Darin Latimore**, 2016 BPF Host/Co-Presenting Sponsor  
Associate Dean for Medical & Resident Diversity  
UC Davis School of Medicine

Submit Evaluation Forms, Networking, and Exhibits visitation  
*Please submit completed evaluation forms to any Sac Cultural Hub Media Foundation staff member*

The Sac Cultural Hub Media Foundation is proud to partner with co-presenting sponsor, Office of Diversity at the UC Davis School of Medicine in the 6th Annual Northern California Black Physicians Forum (BPF).

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## Forum Team Leadership | 2016 Black Physicians Forum



**Pleshette Robertson** holds a B.A. in Business Administration from San Jose State University. She is the owner of PR & Associates Business Resources which is an advertisement and promotions agency specializing in providing e-mail/e-blast marketing campaigns, website production and consultation to new business and startup organizations. Pleshette just recently received the BWOPA-PAC Ella Hill Hutch 2013 Award in November 2013 and also the 2012-2013 UC Davis Chancellor's Achievement Awards For Diversity And Community in the Community Award category. She also received the 2009-2010 Business Award in November 2009 from the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Sacramento Chapter. Pleshette also received the "Women of Excellence" in March 2008 from the Sacramento Kappa Psi Zeta Chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority. Pleshette was featured in the August 2007 issue on her personal style and noteworthy achievements in the *Sacramento* magazine.



**Vicki Blakely** holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Care Administration/Management where she worked for various hospitals and clinics throughout Southern and Northern California. Vicki is currently studying for her Master's Degree at Capella University. She also owns "Audacity to Promote" a company that specializes in promoting local community events. She was the promoter for the NAACP R&B Festival in 2011. Vicki joined the staff of Sac Cultural Hub in the Fall of 2009 and is the Administrative Secretary working on special grant projects and activities.



**Michael Coleman** was born and raised in Detroit and has worked in broadcast and print media for over twenty years. Here in California, his clients have included *The Sacramento Observer* and Adelante Media Group. He has a Bachelor of Arts with High Honors and Distinction in Communication from the University of Michigan, and is the proud father of two daughters, one of whom has followed in his footsteps as a Michigan alumnus. Michael is approaching fluency in Spanish and is ghost writing a memoir of a Motown Records. Michael joined the team of Sac Cultural Hub as a Staff Writer/Reporter and Advertising Executive in May of 2013.



**Twlia Laster** Laster is the owner of Twlia Makes It Happen! Consulting Service. Ms. Laster has 19 years of experience in providing consulting services to clients in need of strategic marketing, program development, public relations, event management, health education, and smoking cessation facilitation. For the past eight years Ms. Laster has served as the Strategic Marketing and Program Director for Sac Cultural Hub Media Company directly engaged in increasing overall company revenue by revamping the marketing model, developing programs, solidifying corporate and community partnerships. Additionally, Ms. Laster is the Program Manager of The SOL Project, Saving Our Legacy, African Americans for Smoke Free Safe Places, and serves on several advisory committees throughout Northern California.



**Lesley Leatherwood** is the CEO of Leatherwood Marketing, and specializes in national internet marketing and print advertising. She possesses over 19 years of corporate experience, including inside and outside sales, hospitality, public relations, media buying, production assistant in television and four feature films. She is an expert with consulting on promoting, advertising, telemarketing products, events and photography. Lesley is originally from Cardiff Wales, England. Lesley has been with Sac Cultural Hub Media Company since 2008 and serves as the Community Advertising Manager.



**Donna Ramos** writes several multi-cultural novels simultaneously. Her journalism career as a Senior Staff Writer/Reporter for THE HUB Magazine writes multi-cultural novels and her journalism career as a Senior Staff Writer for THE HUB Magazine has yielded interviews with Maxwell, Venus and Serena Williams and HRH Sarah Ferguson Duchess of York, to name a few. As a self-published author, Ramos received acclaim from Essence Magazine and BlackbookPlus.com for her contemporary romance book "HIGH RISE: "M&M, Madness and Mayhem," the final book in her HIGH RISE Trilogy, was released in 2013.



**Valarie Scruggs** is the Health Equity Manager at Cares Community Health where she designs programs to reduce health disparities by educating the public on health insurance and managing overall health. She is also owner of VisionStep, a consultant business focused on program development and grant writing. She has 15 years of experience in program planning, securing funding, and implementing effective public health campaigns. She develops strategic alliances to implement campaigns that increase knowledge and encourage individuals and communities to take action to reduce their risk for disease. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Social Ecology from University of California, Irvine with an emphasis in Psychology and Social Behavior. Valarie also serves as Program Development Manager for the Sac Cultural Hub Media Foundation and is the Community Advocate for Saving Our Legacy, African Americans for Smoke Free Safe Places (The SOL Project).

## Forum Leadership Welcome Message | 2016 Black Physicians Forum

Greetings!

Welcome to the 6th Annual Black Physicians Forum! We are excited to partner once again with UC Davis School of Medicine to bring together this dedicated group of physicians, medical students, nurses, allied health providers and community residents. Over the years, the Black Physicians Forum has taken an in-depth look at how health issues are impacting African Americans. We're proud of continued collaborative relationships that have been forged across silos focused on creating health equity and improving health disparities among African Americans and medically underserved people in Northern California.

As you recall from our 5th annual Forum, the executive summary of the Strategies to Improve Health Equity Where African Americans Live, Work, Learn, Worship and Play in Sacramento, California: A Community Action Plan (also known as The CAP or CAP) was discussed which explored disparities related to heart disease and type 2 diabetes; and tobacco use and obesity as two risk factors for these disparities. The CAP also explores educational attainment, economic development, and racial discrimination/social justice as three social determinants of health. On February 3, 2016, Sac Cultural Hub Media Foundation partnered with The SOL Project in hosting the Community Action Plan Implementation Symposium. From the 65 executive managers who attended, four smaller collaboratives will be developed around each disparity and risk factor to ensure that activities are properly implemented and in alignment with best practices that reduce socioeconomic and ethnic disparities in healthcare and health status for African Americans in Sacramento County. These organizations will receive training and technical assistance on evaluation, communications, community assessments, grant making and cultural competency to strengthen their relationships with the African American communities. These capacity building trainings will ensure that their pilot projects will be considered as evaluation based best practices for others to follow throughout California and Nationally.

Today we will discuss how legislation can potentially affect African American wellbeing. Some of the most important policies impacting African Americans in the past 50 years have to do with racial profiling, African American business ownership, fair sentencing and health reform; all of which tie into our subject matter this evening. Marijuana is the most commonly used drug in the United States and was a well-established medicine until it was federally criminalized in 1937. Twenty-three states and Washington D.C. have approved the medical use of marijuana. 16 states and D.C. have decriminalized its use. However, a 2012 ACLU reported black people are 3.7 times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than white people despite comparable usage rates. Furthermore, in counties with the worst disparities, blacks were as much as 30 times more likely to be arrested.

Tonight our keynote and panelist will discuss the health and social justice impact on the African American community with potential legalization of marijuana in California. As a Champion of health equity for African Americans, Sac Cultural Hub Media Foundation is committed to providing our community with the information they need to make informed decisions on health care policy and practice. We look forward to great discussion and edification on current and potential legislation, economic attainment, well-being, substance abuse and decriminalization. African American health care leaders are a powerful cooperative to improve health outcomes in the African American community. Increasing participation in the public policy landscape can intensify our focus and eventually improve all social determinants of health that have negatively impacted the long term physical and emotional health of African Americans.

True Blessings!



**Pleshette Robertson**  
CEO & Founder - Sac Cultural Hub, Chief Editor of THE HUB Magazine President - Sac Cultural Hub Media Foundation



**Twlia Laster**  
Strategic Marketing Director  
Sac Cultural Hub Media Company  
Owner - Twlia Makes It Happen!



**Valarie Scruggs**  
Program Development Manager - Sac Cultural Hub Media Foundation

## History of Sac Cultural Hub Media Company & Foundation | 2016 Black Physicians Forum

Working to promote healthy lifestyles among African American and urban communities in Northern California, Sac Cultural Hub Media Foundation (SCHMF) was created in 2003 to develop programs which mentor young adults, women, and underserved communities. The Foundation has implemented programs in partnership with corporations, businesses and individuals to promote higher education, provide entrepreneurship opportunities, further diversity partnerships, and improve and encourage collaborative efforts through exceptional signature events that include:

- **Exceptional Women of Color (EWOC ) Networking Brunch Conference**
- **Hub Choice Awards (HCA ) Show**
- **Black Physicians Forum (BPF)**
- **BPF Medical Student Scholarship Program**
- **Young Exceptional Women of Color (Y-EWOC) Scholarship Competition**
- **Young Women's Summit (YWS)**

The mission of the Sac Cultural Hub Media Foundation is to provide exciting non-traditional vehicles of engagement where businesses and non-profit organizations can market services and products, mentor and provide public service information to educate and inspire the urban community. Our primary goal is to motivate and empower African American professionals, communities, and youth to thrive and succeed in life.

The Sac Cultural Hub Media Foundation utilizes the Sacculturalhub.com Media Company to connect with the African American and Urban



communities of Northern California. Sacculturalhub.com is known as the #1 grassroots multi-media organization in Northern California and is the most popular resource for networking of businesses, non-profit organizations, community resources, entertainment, and individuals.

Pleshette Robertson, the CEO and Founder of Sacculturalhub.com launched the website in March 2002. The website provides an internet platform for news, multicultural events, career profiles, professional business services, community resources, educational opportunities, corporate advertising, and photo gallery of Northern California residents, visitors, and celebrities. The website currently receives over 2 million national hits each month with over 50,000 unique visitors each month. In February 2006, Ms. Robertson implemented a signature publication to complement the website. THE HUB: Urban Entertainment & Lifestyle Magazine caters to affluent urban professionals, working class families, and underserved African American and mainstream communities with a mission to highlight these individuals for their community contributions which increases enthusiasm in the community and helps others to celebrate what Northern California has to offer.

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## Capital City Welcome | 2016 Black Physicians Forum

It is my honor to welcome you to this year's 6th Annual Northern California Black Physicians Forum, an event that strives to connect physicians, clinicians, medical students, and health administrators with colleagues throughout Northern California. It is in these interactions that we continue to demonstrate leadership and foster collaboration in promoting access to adequate healthcare, as well as fight for social justice. This year's theme celebrates this endeavor. The theme titled, "Discussing Health & Social Justice Impact on the African American Community with Potential Legalization of Marijuana in California" is one that bears great weight on the African American community, who are disproportionately affected by mass incarceration, particularly related to drug offenses.



On behalf of the California State Legislature and the 30th Senate District, I offer my sincere appreciation to each of you for your commitment to groundbreaking research and community engagement. Your work will not go unnoticed and will surely have a resounding impact on us all. I wish you all the best and am very excited for the great work ahead.

Warmest Regards,

HOLLY J. MITCHELL  
SENATOR, 26th DISTRICT



As the Assemblymember for the California Legislature's Seventh Assembly District, I'd like to welcome you to the 6th Annual Black Physicians Forum.

This year's topic, "Discussing Health & Social Justice Impact on the African American Community with Potential Legalization of Marijuana in California" will examine existing laws that govern the production and distribution of marijuana in California and how these regulations impact the health and well-being of the African American community. With an initiative on the November ballot to legalize the recreational use of marijuana in California, this is a very timely conversation.

It is refreshing to see this type of annual collaboration between health professionals, community leaders, and hospital systems. As a community, we must continue to host and support these annual conversations around the disparities in health outcomes for the African American community and share best practices on how to combat them.

As the day's forum concludes with this wonderful reception, I congratulate you on another successful forum. The work that you do to ensure the equality and accessibility of healthcare services for the African American community is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Kevin McCarty  
Assemblymember, 7th District



Greetings!

As Mayor of the city of Sacramento, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the 6th Annual Northern California Black Physicians Forum at the UC Davis School of Medicine.

I would like to recognize tonight's keynote speaker, Dr. H. Westley Clark, whose long and distinguished career has significantly impacted research, practice, policies and programs in the treatment of substance use disorders, and guest presenters who will discuss the Legalization of Marijuana in California and the Health and Social Justice Impact on the African American Community. I applaud the Black Physicians Forum for continuing the tradition of bringing physician leaders together to discuss collaborative roles in chronic disease education, prevention and healthcare access. Your insight continues to benefit Sacramento and communities across Northern California.

I extend my thanks to the organizers and sponsors for their work in making this event possible and offer my congratulations to the scholarship nominees honored tonight.

Thank you for all that you do and best wishes for a memorable and successful event!

Sincerely,



Kevin Johnson  
MAYOR



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## Discussing Health & Social Justice Impact on the African American Community with Potential Legalization of Marijuana in California | 2016 Black Physicians Forum

California was the first state to allow medical marijuana. Now, two decades later, voters are expected to be asked whether to legalize recreational use of the drug. The legalization measure on the statewide November ballot is the product of months of negotiations between groups with varying interests, from drug-law reformers, to growers and distributors, to famous financiers and politicians.

The state's marijuana industry is often described as a wild west of sorts: There are no regulations, taxes or environmental protections for recreational cannabis. The measure would legalize possession of 1 ounce of marijuana and cultivation of six plants by adults over the age of 21, and create laws for distribution and sale. It would impose a 15 percent tax on retail sales, and cultivation taxes of \$9.25 per ounce of flowers and \$2.75 per ounce of leaves. Localities could ban recreational marijuana businesses in their jurisdictions with local voter approval. An updated version of the measure also allows localities to enact bans without holding a vote of the people

Marijuana—also called weed, herb, pot, grass, bud, ganja, Mary Jane, and a vast number of other slang terms—is a greenish-gray mixture of the dried, shredded leaves and flowers of *Cannabis sativa*—the hemp plant. Some users smoke marijuana in hand-rolled cigarettes called joints; many use pipes, water pipes (sometimes called bongs), or marijuana cigars called blunts (often made by slicing open cigars and replacing some or all of the tobacco with marijuana).<sup>1</sup> Marijuana can also be used to brew tea and, particularly when it is sold or consumed for medicinal purposes, is frequently mixed into foods (“edibles”) such as brownies, cookies, or candies. In addition, concentrated resins containing high doses of marijuana's active ingredients, including honey-like “hash oil,” waxy “budder,” and hard amber-like “shatter,” are increasingly popular among both recreational and medical users.

The main psychoactive (mind-altering) chemical in marijuana, responsible for most of the intoxicating effects sought by recreational users, is delta-9-tetrahydro-cannabinol (THC). The chemical is found in resin produced by the leaves and buds primarily of the female cannabis plant. The plant also contains more than 500 other chemicals, including over 100 compounds that are chemically related to THC, called cannabinoids.<sup>2</sup> It is also reported that there are numerous non-psychoactive, yet highly therapeutic cannabinoids in marijuana as well.<sup>3</sup>

The Adult Use of Marijuana Act (AUMA), initiative is expected to be on the November 2016 ballot to tax, regulate, and control marijuana for adults in California. Currently in California, nonmedical marijuana use is unregulated, untaxed, and occurs without any consumer or environmental protections. The Control, Regulate and Tax Adult Use of Marijuana Act will legalize marijuana for those over 21 years old, protect children, and establish laws to regulate marijuana cultivation, distribution, sale and use, and will protect Californians and the environment from potential dangers. It establishes the

Bureau of Marijuana Control within the Department of Consumer Affairs to regulate and license the marijuana industry. Marijuana is currently legal in our state for medical use and illegal for nonmedical use. Abuse of the medical marijuana system in California has long been widespread, but recent bipartisan legislation signed by Governor Jerry Brown is establishing a comprehensive regulatory scheme for medical marijuana. The AUMA is expected to consolidate and streamline regulation and taxation for both nonmedical and medical marijuana.

Twenty-three states, plus the District of Columbia, allow the medical use of marijuana. Currently, marijuana growth and sale is not being taxed by the State of California, which means our state is missing out on hundreds of millions of dollars in potential tax revenue every year. An initial financial analysis shows it could bring in additional state and local tax revenues ranging from the high hundreds of millions to more than \$1 billion a year.

Most of the proceeds must be spent for specified purposes such as substance-use disorder education, prevention, treatment and law enforcement<sup>17</sup>

The AUMA will tax both the growth and sale of marijuana to generate hundreds of millions of dollars annually. The revenues will cover the cost of administering the new law and will provide funds to: invest in public health programs that educate youth to prevent and treat serious substance abuse; train local law enforcement to enforce the new law with a focus on DUI enforcement; invest in communities to reduce the illicit market and create job opportunities; and provide for environmental cleanup and restoration of public lands damaged by illegal marijuana cultivation. Other main provisions of the AUMA include:

### **Allows adults age 21+ to possess, transport, purchase, consume and share up to one ounce of marijuana and eight grams of marijuana concentrates.**

- Using marijuana in public will remain illegal.
- Driving while impaired will remain illegal.
- Imposes a 15% excise tax on all marijuana sales.
- The independent Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) expects annual revenue to eventually reach over \$1 billion.
- Saves state and local governments \$100 million annually due to reduced legal and incarceration costs.

### **Directs tax revenues to the newly established California Marijuana Tax Fund.**

- 60% of the fund will be directed towards youth substance abuse prevention, treatment, and education.
- 20% goes to helping state and local law enforcement.

## Discussing Health & Social Justice Impact on the African American Community with Potential Legalization of Marijuana in California | 2016 Black Physicians Forum

- 20% will be used for environmental restoration, cleanup, and enforcement efforts.
- Additionally, a portion of revenue will be allocated for medical marijuana research and to studying implementation outcomes.
- Creates a community reinvestment fund that will allocate tens of millions of dollars annually towards economic development and job placement for neighborhoods most in need.
- A portion of revenue will also be used for medical marijuana research and for studying implementation outcomes.

### **Greatly reduces – and in many cases, eliminates – criminal penalties for marijuana offenses.**

- Would help alleviate the currently overburdened criminal justice system.

### **Imposes the strictest regulations governing labeling, packaging and testing of marijuana products in the nation. These are designed to protect children from accessing marijuana, and to convey warnings to help adults consume safely.**

- The Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) will serve as the lead regulatory agency.
- The Department of Public Health (DPH) will oversee testing and manufacturing.
- The Department of Food & Agriculture (DFA) will oversee cultivation.

### **Favors small scale producers and keeps large corporations from gaining a monopoly.**

- Delays issuance of large cultivation licenses for the first five years that AUMA is in effect allowing smaller growers to establish themselves in the market.
- Restricts large producers from vertically integrating with each other.

### **Legalizes industrial hemp production.**

- Hemp products have an astonishing number of useful applications as well as a net environmental benefit.
- Would add millions of dollars to the California economy and create new jobs.

Children under the age of 18 can just as easily purchase marijuana on the black market as adults can. By legalizing marijuana, the AUMA may incapacitate the black market, and move marijuana purchases into a legal structure with strict safeguards against children accessing it. The AUMA could prohibit the sale of nonmedical marijuana to those under 21 years old, and provide new resources to educate youth

against drug abuse and train local law enforcement to enforce the new law. It proposes barring marijuana businesses from being located within 600 feet of schools and other areas where children congregate. It establishes mandatory and strict packaging and labeling requirements for marijuana and marijuana products and mandates that marijuana and marijuana products cannot be advertised or marketed towards children.

There are currently no laws governing adult use marijuana businesses to ensure that they operate in accordance with existing California laws. The AUMA set up a comprehensive system governing marijuana businesses at the state level and safeguards local control, allowing local governments to regulate marijuana-related activities, to subject marijuana businesses to zoning and permitting requirements, and to ban marijuana businesses by a vote of the people within a locality.

Currently, illegal marijuana growers steal or divert millions of gallons of water without any accountability. The AUMA plans to create strict environmental regulations to ensure that the marijuana is grown efficiently and legally, to regulate the use of pesticides, to prevent wasting water, and to minimize water usage to crack down on the illegal use of water, while providing funds to restore lands that have been damaged by illegal marijuana grows. If a business does not demonstrate they are in full compliance with the applicable water usage and environmental laws, they will have their license revoked.

### **Social Justice**

The courts are clogged with cases of non-violent drug offenses. By legalizing marijuana, pressure on the courts, but continue to allow prosecutors to charge the most serious marijuana-related offenses as felonies, while reducing the penalties for minor marijuana-related offenses as set forth in the Act. Bringing marijuana into a regulated and legitimate market, the AUMA may create a transparent and accountable system to help police crackdown on the underground black market that currently makes billions from marijuana trafficking and jeopardizing public safety. Black and brown people are disproportionately targeted by these laws. Study show that African Americans are far more likely to be arrested and incarcerated for marijuana possession. “Three Strikes” provisions and mandatory sentencing mean that laws rooted in bigotry and buttressed by fiction are serving to shred and destabilize entire communities, every day. Approximately 750,000 people were arrested for marijuana law violations each year according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s annual Uniform Crime Report – comprising about half (48 percent) of all drug arrests in the United States. A decade ago, marijuana arrests comprised just 44 percent of all drug arrests. 11 Approximately 42 percent of all drug arrests nationwide are for marijuana possession. Of total arrests for marijuana law violations, more than 87 percent were for simple possession, not sale or manufacture. There are more arrests for marijuana possession every year than for all violent crimes combined. A marijuana arrest is no small matter. Most people

## Discussing Health & Social Justice Impact on the African American Community with Potential Legalization of Marijuana in California | 2016 Black Physicians Forum

are handcuffed, placed in a police car, taken to a police station, fingerprinted and photographed, held in jail for 24 hours or more, and then arraigned before a judge. The arrest creates a permanent criminal record that can easily be found on the internet by employers, landlords, schools, credit agencies and banks. The collateral sanctions of a marijuana possession arrest can include loss of employment, financial aid, housing and child custody. According to a 2012 ACLU report, black people are 3.7 times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than white people despite comparable usage rates. Furthermore, in counties with the worst disparities, blacks were as much as 30 times more likely to be arrested.

States spent an estimated \$3.61 billion enforcing marijuana possession laws in 2010 alone. New York and California combined spent over \$1 billion. 12

### Black Owned and Operated Dispensaries

The AUMA could create a comprehensive regulatory structure in which every marijuana business is overseen by a specialized agency with relevant expertise. The Bureau of Marijuana Control, housed in the Department of Consumer Affairs, will oversee the system and ensure transition to the legal market, with licenses issued beginning in 2018. The Department of Consumer Affairs will also license and oversee marijuana retailers, distributors, and microbusinesses. The Department of Food and Agriculture will license and oversee marijuana cultivation, ensuring it is environmentally safe. The Department of Public Health will license and oversee manufacturing and testing, ensuring consumers receive a safe product. The State Board of Equalization will collect the special marijuana taxes, and the Controller will allocate the revenue to administer the new law and provide the funds to critical investments. Additionally The Act is to ensure the nonmedical marijuana industry in California will be built around small and medium sized businesses by prohibiting large-scale cultivation licenses for the first five years. The Adult Use of Marijuana Act also protects consumers and small businesses by imposing strict anti-monopoly restrictions for businesses that participate in the nonmedical marijuana industry. 4 Licensing and regulation of marijuana would be handled by a Bureau of Marijuana Control within the Department of Consumer Affairs. The Department of Food and Agriculture would be charged with licensing and overseeing marijuana cultivation while the Department of Public Health would license and oversee manufacturing and testing. The state Board of Equalization would collect marijuana taxes and the state Controller's Office would distribute the revenue.

African American have several barriers to overcome to own and operate dispensaries. Aspiring marijuana business owners need a clean record and access to large amounts of both financial and social capital. Experts estimate the legal marijuana industry will bring in \$10.8 billion in total sales by 2019. Sales from 2013 to 2014 increased 74 percent, making cannabis one of the fastest-growing industries in the nation. Those interested will need to have the know-how and influence to navigate complicated bureaucratic processes involved in acquiring a license and have the financial resources which can cost thousands to millions of dollars to get started. Getting a license to sell cannabis requires a lot of research to apply. Many states will not

let you apply for a cannabis license if you have had a misdemeanor or arrest for possession of any drug including marijuana. Also, for a dispensary to succeed and thrive in any neighborhood, one will need to create buy-in from community leaders. There may be a hesitation for black entrepreneurs to try to enter the industry because black and brown people have historically been more likely to be fined or arrested on drug charges.

### Health & Wellness

For many seriously ill people, medical marijuana is the only medicine that relieves their pain and suffering, or treats symptoms of their medical condition, without debilitating side effects. Marijuana's medicinal benefits are incontrovertible, now proven by decades of peer reviewed, controlled studies published in highly respected medical journals. 5 Marijuana has been shown to alleviate symptoms of wide range of debilitating medical conditions including cancer, HIV/AIDS, multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's Disease, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), epilepsy, Crohn's Disease, and glaucoma, and may often be an effective alternative to narcotic painkillers. Evidence of marijuana's efficacy in treating severe and intractable pain is particularly impressive. Researchers at the University of California conducted a decade of randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trials on the medical utility of inhaled marijuana, concluding that marijuana should be a "first line treatment" for patients with painful neuropathy, who often do not respond to other available treatments. Marijuana has been shown to be effective in reducing the nausea induced by cancer chemotherapy, stimulating appetite in AIDS patients, and reducing intraocular pressure in people with glaucoma. There is also appreciable evidence that marijuana reduces muscle spasticity in patients with neurological disorders. Marijuana has also been shown to help with mental health conditions, particularly PTSD. There are also concerned about the health impacts of marijuana use, especially on lung health. The American Lung Association, Saving Our Legacy, African Americans for Smoke Free Safe Places (The SOL Project) and The African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council are against smoking marijuana because of the risks it poses to lung health. Whether from burning wood, tobacco or marijuana, toxins and carcinogens are released from the combustion of materials. Smoke from marijuana combustion has been shown to contain many of the same toxins, irritants and carcinogens as tobacco smoke. 6-9 Marijuana smokers tend to inhale more deeply and hold their breath longer than cigarette smokers, which leads to a greater exposure per breath to tar. 10 Secondhand marijuana smoke contains many of the same toxins and carcinogens found in directly inhaled marijuana smoke, in similar amounts if not more. While there is no data on the health consequences of breathing secondhand marijuana smoke, there is concern that it could cause harmful health effects, especially among vulnerable children in the home. Smoking marijuana clearly damages the human lung. Research shows that smoking marijuana causes chronic bronchitis and marijuana smoke has been shown to injure the cell linings of the large airways, which could explain why smoking marijuana leads to symptoms such as chronic cough, phlegm production, wheeze and acute bronchitis. Smoking marijuana has also been linked to cases of air pockets in between both lungs and between the lungs and the chest wall, as well as large air bubbles in the lungs among young to middle-aged adults, mostly heavy smokers



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of marijuana. However, it's not possible to establish whether these occur more frequently among marijuana smokers than the general population because additional research on the health effects of secondhand marijuana smoke is needed; which support of the AUMA could provide.

## Youth Access

Legalization of marijuana is raising concern on youth access. Marijuana use by adolescents has grown steadily as more states enact various decriminalization laws. 13 According to CDC data, more teens now smoke marijuana than cigarettes. 14 It is unclear, however, whether this trend indicates a causal relationship or mere correlation. Furthermore, legalization of marijuana could result in advertising campaigns for its use, some of which might be directed toward adolescents. Control measures to prevent advertising to young people, as recent experience demonstrates, may be difficult to implement. As revealed during the course of the Comprehensive Tobacco Settlement negotiations, tobacco companies systematically have marketed their products to young people even while disavowing any efforts to do so. Even after the Comprehensive Tobacco Settlement was implemented (which prohibited any youth-oriented advertising), tobacco companies continued marketing to young people.

## Conclusion

Lack of Legalization creates confusion and several questions for public health. As it stands, little is known about the health risks or benefits of marijuana use because the current classification of the drug doesn't allow for clinical monitoring. Regulation of marijuana will allow us to better understand potential clinical uses, close loopholes on regulations and improve social justice for African Americans and all disparate populations negatively impacted.

Most agree that tight controls and specific monitoring of marijuana is needed so that it will be kept out of the hands of children. California needs the ability to strictly regulate and tax this industry to protect our most vulnerable citizens and offset community impacts. Sac Cultural Hub Media Foundation and The Black Physicians Forum respects the intensely held beliefs on both sides of this debate – from the economic, environmental, spiritual, social justice, local government and law enforcement perspectives. We agree with statements made by Dr. Steven E. Larson is the president of the California Medical Association who states “as physicians, our overriding objective – and our only consideration – is the health of our patients. It's clear to us that the current system undermines public health, fails to protect children and leaves state and local government without the funds to properly police or educate the public about the risks of marijuana.

Sac Cultural Hub Media Foundation and its Black Physicians Forum do not endorse any specific legislation. However, we whole heartedly agree with any policy that improves health equity and reduce the number of discriminatory, disproportionate harassment and incarcerations of Blacks and other persons of color. Legalization, decriminalization and regulation of marijuana may achieve these results.

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**Master of Ceremonies Thomas Hopkins, M.D.**

Thomas. Hopkins, M.D.. is a board-certified physician in Internal Medicine who is in private practice in Sacramento, California. Dr. Hopkins is the Medical Director for Cardiac Rehabilitation and Wellness, Employee Health Services, Utilization Management, and holds leadership positions in a large, multi-specialty IPA in Sacramento, California. Dr. Hopkins currently serves as the Chief Medical Correspondent for KCRA-3 in Sacramento, an NBC-affiliate television station where he delivers live television broadcasts on current issues relevant to health and medicine. Dr. Hopkins has been a practicing physician for 16 years. His areas of expertise include bariatric medicine, and he has a keen interest in Men's Health issues serving on a National advisory panel for Erectile Dysfunction. He formerly served as a Delegate to the American Medical Association and California Medical Association. He serves as Treasurer and Board Member for Sutter Independent Physicians which is an organization of more than 750 independent practicing physicians in the Sacramento region. Dr. Hopkins has genuine interest in improving patient education, increasing health screening and access to basic health care services, and maximizing preventive strategies to preserve health and reduce disease.



**Keynote Presenter  
H. Westley Clark,  
M.D., J.D., M.P.H.,  
CAS, FASAM**  
Dean's Executive  
Professor of Public  
Health at Santa Clara  
University

**Dr. H. Westley Clark** is currently the Dean's Executive Professor of Public Health at Santa Clara University in Santa Clara California. He is formerly the Director of the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Service, where he led the agency's national effort to provide effective and accessible treatment to all Americans with addictive disorders. Dr. Clark was also the former chief of the Associated Substance Abuse Programs at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in San Francisco, California and a former associate clinical professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of California at San Francisco (UCSF). Dr. Clark served as a senior program consultant to the Robert Wood Johnson, Substance Abuse Policy Program, a co-investigator on a number of the National Institute on Drug Abuse-funded research grants. He worked for Senator Edward Kennedy as a health counsel on the US Senate Committee of Labor and Human Resources. He has subsequently joined the Board of Directors of the non-profit Felton Institute, a family service agency in San Francisco. He has also joined the Board of Directors of Faces and Voices of Recovery, a group that advocates for the needs of people in recovery from addiction.



**Deborah Peterson Small** is the Executive Director of Break the Chains, a public policy research and advocacy organization committed to addressing the disproportionate impact of punitive drug policies on poor communities of color. Break the Chains was founded in the belief that community activism and advocacy is an essential component of progressive policy reform. Break the Chains works to engage families and community leaders in promoting alternatives to the failed “war on drugs” by adopting public health approaches to substance abuse and drug-related crime. Break the Chains is an advocate and voice for those affected most by drug policies but too often unheard in policy debates and decisions.




**Dr. Lakisha Jenkins, N.D., R.H. (AHG)** holds a Doctorate in Naturopathy, a B.S. in Holistic Nutrition and is a registered professional herbalist with the American Herbalist Guild. She is Founder and CEO of The Kiona T Jenkins Foundation of Natural Health (Kiona Foundation Inc, 2003), a 501(c)(3) holistic health nonprofit organization and its subsidiary, Kiona’s Farm’acy, which has provided holistic health services to the Central Valley since 2010 and is a sustaining member of NCIA. Dr Jenkins serves on both the NCIA Board of Directors as a Founding Director of the California Cannabis Industry Association – the California State affiliate of NCIA. In addition Dr. Jenkins honors her commitment to the cooperative movement by supporting the efforts of Jenasis Cooperative Incorporated, an association of business owners and professionals that meet common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations though jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprises.



**Alana Mathews** was appointed by Governor Jerry Brown as the Public Adviser for the California Energy Commission in June of 2013. A former Deputy District Attorney for Sacramento County, Ms. Mathews began her legal career prosecuting a broad range misdemeanor and felony cases including DUI, theft and drug related offenses, domestic violence, attempted murder, and various assault crimes. Prior to becoming a Deputy District Attorney, Alana served as the 2004 Graduate Legal Scholar Executive Fellow for the California Attorney’s General Office. She has served on the Sacramento Gang Prevention Task Force, Advisory Chair for the Volunteers in Parole mentoring program, is the founder and creator of the Critical Thinking Workshop™ and current adviser for the Sacramento County Teen Court project. She earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Philosophy from Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia and a Juris Doctor (J.D.) from the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law in 2003. She earned a Master of Laws, (LL.M) in Governmental Affairs and Public Policy in 2004 from the same university.



**Dr. Darin Latimore, M.D.** is the Associate Dean of Medical and Resident Diversity. As Associate Dean his role is to oversee the Office of Student and Resident Diversity which is to promote an organizational culture in which all people are valued and respected independent of their differences such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics. He is a practicing clinician who graduated from UC Davis School of Medicine and did his Internal Residency–Primary Care Track at UCD. He is Clinical Faculty at the Center for AIDS Research, Education and Services (CARES). CARES provides acute and continuing care for HIV/AIDS patients who are uninsured or underinsured. As a Ryan White Supported Clinic, CARES provides medical, dental, mental health and rug and alcohol rehabilitation. Dr. Latimore precepts medical students and residents in this clinic.




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**Karen Hart, M.D.** is a board certified family physician and healthcare delivery innovator. After a decade of work in the managed care system, which she feels “put too much emphasis on the bottom line and shortchanged patients,” Dr. Karen Hart opened her unique medical practice in 2009. Her model combines traditional and alternative medicine. Dr. Hart is passionate about serving patients of all economic means. She assists the uninsured and small business owners with an innovative membership plan that provides access to her primary care services and a network of specialists. She has gone one step further by opening her heart and her practice to homeless women referred by a local organization that helps them regain a productive role in society. A graduate of the University of Iowa Roy J and Lucille Carver College of Medicine, Dr. Hart’s work has been featured on CNN, KCRA, News10, Hearst Corporation national news and the Sacramento Bee. She is a Diplomat of the American Board Family Medicine and currently sits on the Advisory Board of Sure Safe Pharmaceuticals. A California native, she enjoys golf, tennis and cooking and is the proud mother of three girls.



**Monica Crooks, D.D.S.** was raised in the USAF, where her dad served our country for 28 years and she was blessed with the opportunity to live all over the US as well as in many other countries, finishing High School in Japan and college in Scotland. Fluent only in English, Dr. Crooks can get by in Japanese, Spanish and German. Education was huge in her youth. Dr. Crooks’ parents taught that education is the ticket to self-sufficiency and financial independence and she is glad that she listened. Dr. Crooks has been in private practice as a general and cosmetic dentist for 20 years here in Sacramento. Having attended UCLA School of Dentistry and completed a General Practice Residency at David Grant Medical Center, Dr. Crooks loves her profession because modern technology has given dentistry the ability to do nearly miraculous things with anyone’s smile. She loves the sense of accomplishment that comes from making an unattractive smile, suddenly gorgeous. Even more, Dr. Crooks love the tears of joy and the hugs of gratitude that she gets from her happy patients!



**Darryl Hunter, M.D.** received his medical degree from the Uniformed Services University in 1988 and completed his radiation oncology residency at U.C. San Francisco in 1993. Dr. Hunter has served as an active duty Air Force physician for 17 years before joining Kaiser Permanente in 2005. Dr. Hunter participates in community service projects and considers it an obligation of good citizenship. He serves as a member of the Sacramento Community Cancer Coalition where 11 independent community-based organizations are committed to improving access to free cancer testing for underserved. He also serves as a member of the Sacramento Community Veterans Alliance where civic leaders, veteran service organizations and government agencies work to connect veterans to service-connected benefits. Dr. Hunter also participates in activities under the Dr Ernest and Arthella Hunter Foundation, Inc. which provides scholarships for physicians committed to improving access to cancer care for those in underserved communities.



**Darin Latimore, M.D.** is the Associate Dean of Medical and Resident Diversity. As Associate Dean his role is to oversee the Office of Student and Resident Diversity which is to promote an organizational culture in which all people are valued and respected independent of their differences such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics. He is a practicing clinician who graduated from UC Davis School of Medicine and did his Internal Residency–Primary Care Track at UCD. He is Clinical Faculty at the Center for AIDS Research, Education and Services (CARES). CARES provides acute and continuing care for HIV/AIDS patients who are uninsured or underinsured. As a Ryan White Supported Clinic, CARES provides medical, dental, mental health and rug and alcohol rehabilitation. Dr. Latimore precepts medical students and residents in this clinic.



**Glenn A. Middleton, D.D.S.** was born and raised in San Francisco, California. He received a B.S. in Zoology from the University of California, Davis, and then received a D.D.S. from the University of California, San Francisco. Dr. Middleton completed a post-doctorate program in prosthetics at the Stanford University Medical Center and the Veteran’s Administration Hospital in Palo Alto, California. He provided care for the Head and Neck Oncology Unit and the Spinal Rehabilitation Department as well. Since 1992, he has maintained a private practice in restorative dentistry in Sacramento, California. Dr. Middleton has traveled abroad to provide dental care for the impoverished in Belize, Cuba and the Philippines. He is a member of the American Dental Association, the California Dental Association, the Sacramento District Dental Society, and is the current president of the Sacramento Chapter of the National Dental Association.





**Chet P. Hewitt** is the President and CEO of Sierra Health Foundation in Sacramento, California. Since joining the foundation in 2007, Chet has focused the foundation's grantmaking on health promotion, access, and disparity interventions that target youth and other vulnerable populations. Prior to joining Sierra Health, Chet served as the director of the Alameda County Social Services Agency, associate director with the Rockefeller Foundation in New York, and as a program director at the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice in San Francisco. In addition to his work, Chet enjoys cycling and gardening. However, his greatest joy is time spent with his wife, Laura, and their two young sons, Chet II and Stephan. William Jahmal Miller serves as the National Communications Manager with Kaiser Permanente's Program Offices - Community Benefit. Most recently served in Kaiser's Central Valley Service Area, where he was Manager for Government & Community Relations within the Public Affairs Division. Mr. Miller previously provided overall management of for Sutter Health as Manager for Strategic Marketing & Communications. Prior to that, he was the Program Manager for Sutter Children's Hospital at Sutter Medical Center, Sacramento. He is a board member of the CA Child Care Referral and Resource Network. The following are additional volunteer boards where he serves - American Diabetes Association, Safehaven Ministries, Bloodsource Advisory & Ronald McDonald House Charities. Mr. Miller recently completed an Executive Fellowship with the Nehemiah Emerging Leaders Program in conjunction with the American Leadership Forum & CORO. He completed his undergraduate work at Columbia University, and his graduate work at the University of Southern California.

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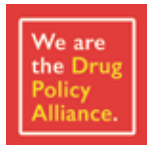
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