

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Nelson Invites Renowned Medical Professional To Testify At Medical Marijuana Hearing

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Dr. Sue Sisley did the first federally approved research on marijuana as medicine (treating vets with PTSD) while working at the University of Arizona Medical Center.

ST. CROIX -- [Dr. Suzanne A. Sisley](#), above, director of Medicinal Plant Science of Heliospectra, AZ, will be the key testifier at the Committee on Health, Hospital and Human Services hearing on Friday at the Frits E. Lawaetz Legislative Hall on this Island, and on Monday at the Earle B. Ottley Legislative Hall in St. Thomas, according to a press release Senator Positive Nelson's office issued Monday.

Ms. Sisley's testimony is part of Mr. Nelson's efforts to win the Legislature's approval for his medical marijuana bill.

"I met Dr. Sisley during my cannabis expedition last spring and was impressed with her research into the potential therapeutic benefits linked to medical marijuana," Mr. Nelson.

Dr. Sisley is trained in both internal medicine and psychiatry and serves as principal investigator for the only FDA-approved randomized controlled trial looking at use of whole-plant marijuana (grown by NIDA) in combat veterans with treatment-resistant post-traumatic stress disorder PTSD.

The measure, Mr. Nelson contends, includes language aimed at restricting the illicit use of the drug that may become an issue if the bill is signed into law. But at a [press conference on Tuesday](#), the senator said patients should not suffer because of a few who choose to break the law.

"Right now we have honest people, grandma, grand parents, who are going about all kinds of uncanny and unscrupulous ways to acquire medicine. Why put them through that? I'm concerned about my children having sex, will we make it illegal?

"I would like for us to talk about regulation, since there's a cannabis control board that's being established [through the cannabis legislation], I would like it to become the Alcohol, Tobacco and Cannabis Control Board. Right now alcohol is being too freely sold in our community. I am with you with wanting to have protection for our young and individuals who we feel shouldn't be involved in these types of activities," Mr. Nelson said.

He said Dr. Sisley's invitation to testify was based on her specialized knowledge of marijuana.

"She is the epitome of resilience in the marijuana industry. Despite financial hardship with research funding and political pressure, Dr. Sisley never wavered her professional obligation to patients," Mr. Nelson said.

Dr. Sisley received her higher education from Northern Arizona University with a degree in chemistry/pre-med and a minor in theater. In 1995 she completed her medical degree at the University of Arizona, College of Medicine. In 2000, Dr. Sisley completed her five-year residency training at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in the fields of internal medicine and psychiatry. During her residency training, Dr. Sisley won the University of Arizona's House Staff Educator of the Year Award annually for 3 consecutive years.

She has received numerous awards for her scholarly contributions, including the UA's Leo B. Hart Humanitarian Award for "outstanding contributions made for social reform" by the University of Arizona College of Medicine in 2001, the President's Point of Light Award, including letters of commendation from former President Clinton and former President Bush, for her efforts to use the Arts to promote health prevention among at-risk youth. Dr. Sisley received the Paul Singer Community Service Award for her devotion to connecting the seriously mentally ill and the arts community as well as her volunteer medical efforts with Burn Camp as well as Camp Hakuna Matata, a camp for kids/families living with HIV/AIDS.

Additionally, Attorney Ken Sobel, consultant, medical marijuana advocate and owner/operator of Cannabis Cultivation, Manufacturing and Dispensaries in California and Arizona as well as Ms. Heather Manus, RN-president, Arizona Cannabis Nurse Association and Chairwoman of the American Cannabis Board-Outreach Committee will also be testifiers on the measure.

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