

10-9-2017

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Recommended Citation

Weinstein, Mark D., "Pharmacy Debates Issue 2, Opioid Treatment, Medical Marijuana" (2017). *News Releases*. 548.
http://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/news_releases/548

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 9, 2017

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Pharmacy Debates Issue 2, Opioid Treatment, Medical Marijuana

CEDARVILLE, OHIO – Third-year professional pharmacy students will cap their law course with a series of debates on recent controversial topics in the news on Wednesday, Oct. 11, from 7-9 p.m. The debates will be held in the Stevens Student Center.

Students chose debate topics in conjunction with course professors Dr. Dennis Sullivan, director of the center for bioethics, and Dr. Marc Sweeney, dean of the school of pharmacy. Students will apply law and ethical principles to debate three issues while fielding questions from lawyers and legal professionals.

The first debate centers around first responders using naloxone to reverse the effects of opioid overdose. While first responders treat repeat drug users with naloxone, they may be too tied up to reach other emergencies. Students will debate if public policy should limit the use of naloxone by first responders for addicts who repeatedly overdose.

Students will also address Ohio Issue 2, which would prohibit government programs from paying more than Veterans Administration prices for prescription drugs, and they will debate if pharmacists should support this initiative. Issue 2 is on this year's November ballot.

The final debate will address medical marijuana use. Federal law lists it as a schedule I drug, so doctors and pharmacists cannot fill it. Students will debate if the DEA should change marijuana from a schedule I to a schedule III drug in light of new state law.

"If done correctly, debate is a great way to learn all sides of an issue," said Sullivan, the event's organizer. "Ultimately you might reach a different conclusion, but that has nothing to do with the friendship and fellowship you have with your opponent if they're a fellow Christian, and even more so if they are not."

Last year, Sullivan's students performed similar debates before the Ohio Pharmacists Association. This year, Sweeney and Sullivan are looking for new ways to use these debates to reach others outside the Cedarville community.

"We want our students to be fluent and multilingual in ethics and law," concluded Sullivan. "We are Christian professionals, but we do not always have to resort to buzzwords from our Christian church in how we approach certain conversations. We can often make a strong case for the right thing by using a secular argument."

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 3,963 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than 100 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and leading student satisfaction ratings. For more information about the University, visit www.cedarville.edu.