

# Feds: Pot has no medicinal benefits

By John Hoeffel, Los Angeles Times

Marijuana has been approved by California, many other states and the nation's capital to treat a range of illnesses, but in a decision announced Friday the federal government ruled that it has no accepted medical use and should remain classified as a highly dangerous drug like heroin.

The decision comes almost nine years after medical marijuana supporters asked the government to reclassify cannabis to take into account a growing body of worldwide research that shows its effectiveness in treating certain diseases, such as glaucoma and multiple sclerosis.

Advocates for the medical use of the drug criticized the ruling but were elated that the Obama administration has finally acted, which allows them to appeal to the federal courts. The decision to deny the request was made by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and comes less than two months after advocates asked the U.S. Court of Appeals to force the administration to respond to their petition.

"We have foiled the government's strategy of delay, and we can now go head-to-head on the merits," said Joe Elford, the chief counsel for Americans for Safe Access and the lead attorney on the lawsuit.

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