

Low-cost medicinal pot threatened by legalization

By Brad Branan, Sacramento Bee

The Wo/Men's Alliance for Medical Marijuana survived a raid by federal agents and other existential threats while providing free and low-cost cannabis to seriously ill patients. In operation for the past three decades, the Santa Cruz-based collective is the oldest example of a "compassionate care" program in the nation.

Now, the program and others like it could be forced to close due to an unlikely reason: legalization.

Under state regulations that went into effect Jan. 1, compassionate care programs must collect taxes on the market value of cannabis that they give to patients. Many of these programs say they cannot afford the taxes nor the cost of state and local permits required to obtain cannabis from legal growers.

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