**Are the pot gods crazy?**

Reviewing a September 22, 2016 "Neurology Today" article by Susan Fitzgerald entitled *National Board Offers Guidance for Doctors Prescribing Medical Marijuana"*, all I could think about was the 1980's South African movie, "The Gods Must Be Crazy". The Federation of State Medical Boards has issued guidance to physicians regarding the prescribing or recommending of "medical marijuana", the equivalent of instructing Xi and his tribe on how to use the Coca Cola glass bottle the Gods have given them.

The bottle has utility as a musical instrument and digging tool but creates such societal dysfunction and acrimony, the solution is to dispose of it. Substances in cannabis, like those in many other plants or matter, might well have medical applications, such as treatment of seizures and related conditions in children, as well as harm, especially in the adolescent brain. More research is needed on both.

Yet, out of the heavens - through some alternate reality - society has allegedly been given "medical marijuana" by the secular gods. Cannabis (even unadulterated) is complex (and variable) matter with many substances, each which has the potential for useful medical application or harm. It is not a medicine any more than is "medical merlot", matter that may contain substances to relief stress, reduce pain sensation and promote cardiovascular health (resveratrol). Doctors should not be prescribing or recommending undifferentiated substances, but rather stick to educating the population about them.

"Medicines" are purified chemical and biologic substances with an established dose-response physiological effect in certain individuals, when applied in a specified dose, frequency and route of administration. With the advent of precision medicine, these parameters will become even more precise as will the subset of the population who will benefit.

If one has ever visited a cannabis dispensary, like in Colorado, and declared they are seeking something for their "X" ailment (I used glaucoma.) it takes a few nanoseconds to discover the dispensers are totally ignorant of the best substance (usually there are several jars of different buds), dose, route of administration (ingestion, inhalation, patch absorption) and frequency of medicinal use. Several suggested I smell the buds to find the one I like.

The "medical" cannabis moniker is twisted and a sham. It reminds me of the "dental monitor" ad on TV, where the individual tells a patient his teeth are awful. When asked what can be done, he responds, I don't know, I am a dental monitor, not a dentist.

A true story from our first few days in Charleston, WV in 2000, involves visiting a tavern. I asked what dark beers were available and told none. An amiable fellow sitting next to us drinking a "bucket" (six beers in ice) told me he loved dark beers and recommended a tavern (which I still visit while in Charleston) where I could find them.

He told me his doctor told him he had bad liver disease and he needed to stop drinking but his bartender told him it was fine if he drank lighter beers. The truth is that except for certain craft or special beers, most major brands have an alcohol content in the 4% - 6% range and in some brands something like a dark porter has a lower percentage than a lager. To avoid hepatic failure listen to your doctor, not bartender. And unless your doctor has a cannabis chart next to the eye chart delineating the specific bud, dose, frequency, mode of administration, do not visit your pot dispenser for "medical" reasons.

Legalizing cannabis for recreational use – like alcohol – is a public policy decision. If folks want to purchase it with a claim they are using it for medical reasons, so be it. However, leave the doctors out of prescribing or recommending undifferentiated cannabis for "medical" use. We do not need the cost, bureaucracy and burden of pretending cannabis is a legitimate "medicine". Throw that bottle away.