Pot potential: Majority of New York residents favor legalized medical marijuana

ITHACA, N.Y. — More than six in 10 New Yorkers support the idea of legalizing marijuana for medicinal use, according to a new Cornell University poll. Support for legalization even carries across the historic upstate-downstate rift in attitudes and values.

Statewide support for legalizing medical marijuana breaks down to 67 percent of Upstate New Yorkers supporting legalization along with 62 percent of Downstate residents, according to the 2010 Cornell Empire State Poll.

That support also crosses gender and racial lines, with 67 percent of New York’s men and 61 percent of its women supporting legalized medical marijuana. Similarly, 66 percent of whites and 60 percent of non-whites are in favor of legalization.

While support for medical marijuana holds consistent statewide across geographic, race and gender lines, the share of people who support legalization significantly varies by household income and political ideology, according to the poll. More liberals (79 percent) and moderates (63 percent) support legalization than do conservatives (49 percent).

Support for legalizing medical marijuana also increases in direct proportion to household income, the poll finds – although a majority of all income levels support legalization. Fifty three percent of New York households with annual incomes of $29,999 or less support the legalization of medical marijuana. That share increases to 57 percent of households with an annual income of $30,000 to $49,999, and 68 percent of households in the $50,000 to $99,999 income bracket. Seventy three percent of households with annual incomes of $100,000 or more support the legalization of medical marijuana.

A majority of New Yorkers in all age brackets also support legalization: Among New Yorkers 18-24 years old, 65 percent support legalization, compared to 73 percent of 25-34 year-olds. Sixty seven percent of those in the 35-44 and 45-54 age
brackets support legalization, along with 65 percent in the 55-64 year age bracket and 52 percent of New Yorkers who are 65 years and older.

For more information about Cornell University’s Empire State Poll, visit: https://sri.cornell.edu/sri/esp.introduction.cfm

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