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JUNE 1, 2021

## NORML IN THE PARK PICNIC

We are SO excited about our upcoming event, NORML IN THE PARK, Saturday, June 12, 2021 from 12:00 PM-4:00 PM at Burns Park.

It is a chance for all of our activists that have worked so hard throughout the years to make cannabis reform a priority.

We will be making some announcements that will affect members, as well as the state in general.

Since it is the month for cereal drive, we are asking each one of you to bring an unopened box of cereal for us to donate for kids that would otherwise go without food this summer. For every box brought, you will receive a small gift.

I look forward to seeing each of you on the 12TH! Many of you are old friends, but I also look forward to meeting new members!

We will be serving BBQ and the Loblobby truck will be there serving ice cream desserts. Come out, bring the family and HAVE FUN!!!

[https://www.eventbrite.com/e/norml-in-the-park-tickets-152233174523?utm-medium=discovery&utm-campaign=social&utm-content=attendeeshare&aff=esfb&utm-source=fb&utm-term=listing&fbclid=IwAR00Y0yjdaYQzqT9zUP6S9pP6Rnn7Yf25005qRcAedrEiorPmuqne0wY2\\_c](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/norml-in-the-park-tickets-152233174523?utm-medium=discovery&utm-campaign=social&utm-content=attendeeshare&aff=esfb&utm-source=fb&utm-term=listing&fbclid=IwAR00Y0yjdaYQzqT9zUP6S9pP6Rnn7Yf25005qRcAedrEiorPmuqne0wY2_c)

## INTERVIEW WITH A CULTIVATOR

### Author: Ang Kerfoot

Mr. Storm Nolan, we appreciate you taking your time to do an interview as one of our state's news cultivators on behalf of Arkansas NORML for their newsletter. The newsletter often highlights various licensed industry Arkansans. And that's the main order of the interview. .

**"Sounds good."**

How do you feel about what's happening in the Arkansas medical cannabis industry? What does our immediate future hold on? I know, you mentioned some stuff about feedback and communication voids, and that's where we left off.

**"From the perspective of the patient, correct?"**

Yes, that's what we were when we left off last time. You were making some solid points, and wanted to ensure that your input was coming purely from a patient's perspective.

**"Yes. I mean, I would, I would definitely. Second that again, except the session is probably going to end on Monday. So, right. Unfortunately, it is too late, which is a real bummer. Because we had opportunities to, to make life a lot easier for patients. And I think most of those opportunities pass by until communications re-open 2023.**

**ARKANSAS NORML**  
1314 E. Woodson Lateral  
Hensley, AR 72065  
501-416-1274

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**(INTERVIEW CONTINUED)**

So one thing, I'm glad you asked one thing in particular, that that could still happen, and I think it's very important is yesterday, Senate Bill 703, was presented to allow patients to renew their medical cannabis cards through telemedicine as a quick recap, during the pandemic during the governor's emergency order that enabled patients to obtain their medical marijuana, written certification form, through telemedicine, and a lot of patients took advantage of that, when that portion of the governor's emergency order ended on March 31 of this year, that closed the door to those patients being able to renew their cards also by telemedicine. And so sb syndical, center three was designed to fix that to where if you, if you if you mean that telemedicine contact with your doctor already, you will be able to renew the same way. And it passed the Senate yesterday. And if the house rules committee meets again, I believe they will take hopefully they will pass that and hopefully the governor will sign it. Yeah, I believe that is their last big opportunity to help patients in this legislative session."

Okay great thank you, is there anything else that you wanted to talk about?

"I have several ideas, (from the patient's perspective) if the industry can work together with patients, and we can have a concerted effort, legislation for 2023 these are just some of the items on my list that I think would be really beneficial to patients. So first is for patients with chronic conditions allowing a doctor to certify for a lifetime patient card. So for example, if you have HIV or intractable pain, you know that by the doctor's opinion, it is chronic and is not going to go away. In most states patients are allotted a lifetime card (that does not need to be renewed) should in other states they do but in Arkansas, I believe they should be able to get the lifetime card.

And then, if not lifetime, some of the states do five year, current expirations for chronic conditions. And that would be much better than what we have now with the annual renewal for every patient."

Right, some kind of a meet in the middle.

"Next up would be adding additional qualifying conditions. There are several that I think everyone could think of. But thus far there has been zero added and that is contrary to the amendments intent."

16?

"Yep. Anxiety being a big one. It's just a matter of the Arkansas Department of Health who is in charge of that qualifying condition process swatted (new proposed conditions) them all down. I

And I think what it's going to take is a real concerted effort to if, you know, if we try to add a condition and it gets denied, we need to go through the court system.

And that way the department health will know, what their, what their bounds are, you know, what the actual interpretation of the amendment should be. Alright, third on my list would be eliminating the telemedicine prohibition. So, this is related to the SB 703. But, as the seven a three is strictly limited to renewals. So, so that my third that they're adding to my list would be allowing initial consultations to be conducted by telemedicine.

As far as patients benefiting legislation, those would be my top three.

It's all doable, it's just a matter of doing it, right. It's just a matter of getting the support, it's just, you know, grinding it out, doing the hard work, convincing our legislators that this is what, what people are going to want, or the patients of Arkansas want. But someone's gotta do it

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# NORML®

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It's great when patients speak up, it's about everyone working together so that we agree on the most effective way for the voices to be heard. The way in which is most likely to result in change.

I see everyone jumping through hoops and just repetition, repetition, repetition, the network's keep growing and communicating. And I guess that's all that we can do at this point is keep growing it between now and the next time, we're going to have a chance to push any major changes being that. Is there anything else that you wanted to expand on regarding that?

**“As far as positive changes for patients that are happening on the radar, a lot of the existing cultivators are expanding their production facilities and there are new cultivators operating. And just going back to our discussion about supply and demand, you know, obviously, demand has been increasing, but if supply increases as well, that should help make cannabis a bit more affordable for patients.”**

And, you know, hopefully having bigger production will allow some people more time for curing and processing and those kinds of thoughts in quality. Competition is always quality, right?

**“That is the idea. You got it.”**

Cannabis it's beautiful, a fun conversation in our agricultural state.

**“Amen to that. Could I throw in one last potential benefit for patients that does not need to be legislatively done? To throw in a potential benefit for patients that does not have to be legislatively done?”**

It would be the prohibition on pre rolls. So when, when the medical marijuana commission updated their rules and regulations last time, they clarified that pre rolls were prohibited. Now, there's an argument that that wasn't necessarily the intent of the amendment, to prohibit pre rolls. And so just through a rules change, I believe that the medical marijuana commission could just eliminate that prohibition and let patients procure pre rolls.

The patient I'm thinking about is the older patient who prefers to smoke the flower, smoke their flower, if their preferred consumption method is pre roll. That is difficult to do dexterity-wise. It's difficult to do for anybody, it is good, especially if you have arthritic fingers or anything like that. It's just not easy. I don't know why we're unnecessarily making it harder for patients who want to consume their cannabis in that method.”

Makes perfect sense since the majority of those needing medical cannabis are over the age of 55.

**“Yes. We talked about kind of focusing patients on how to be most effective. All my three previous segments are all legislative, which is, you know, going through our legislators or senators, representatives, so the pre roll one could be done directly with the commission because the Commission has the power to change their own rules and regulations.”**

Yes, I remember. And this can be done at any time, but you don't have to meet every month. And so a group of organizations could easily get together and be asked to be on the Commission's agenda. And then just just, you know, very calmly and logically laid out the reasons why preroll should not be prohibited.”

I noticed one other thing that we talked about already, is that you take pride in the company being a female-fronted business. And that made it that represented some diversity in the business culture. Would you like to expand?

**“River Valley Relief is an all female led cultivation. I think that will be a first in Arkansas, at least as far as cultivators go.”**

That's cool. This explains a lot to me, too. Gary and Melissa were just saying they just think the world of your mission.

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**“I do them as well. The nice part about being in Ft. Smith, which is not a large city, but a larger city compared to the other cultivators, is that we have a much more diverse worker pool, AKA employment base. We want to be diverse because Ft. Smith is diverse. The strongest teams have a multitude of opinions and experiences, making an organization stronger.**

I wondered if you wanted me to leave out anything regarding cannabis as a replacement for opioids, I know that is a heavy word in the Arkansas communities.

**“I mean, that's one of our big advocacies. I think I told you my story of losing my mother to opiates and I do firmly believe that if she could have legally obtained cannabis to deal with her chronic pain it would have made a world of difference.**

**There's so many Arkansans who struggle with addiction to pills. And these pills are just so it's so addictive, right? It's it, you can't can't really blame it on the patients. It's unfortunate. But you know, they're taking the pills to deal with a physiological problem. If cannabis fixes that, you know, helps deal with that physiological problem. And it doesn't lead to this crazy dependence on opiates or barbiturates or any of those,**

It's like, two different points are getting very blurred. There's pushing for more conditions to be verified with addiction being one of them. Then we also have a recreational consideration to fix opioid addiction, two very different points of usage. Is there anything else that is off your mind that you would like to add into this at all? Or regarding anything that's on the top of your mind before we end our call?

**“I don't. I don't believe so, thank you. I think I got to the main points to offer from a patient perspective.”**

Well, thank you for this insight Mr. Nolan. I am looking forward to making it out. When will River Valley Relief products be hitting stores?

**“Hopefully the fourth quarter! We are not too far off from opening.”**

(NOTE FROM EDITOR)

I want to thank Ang Kerfoot for her wonderful job interviewing Storm Nolan and thank you Storm for taking time from your VERY busy schedule to sit down with Ang and do this interview.

We all look forward to Ang's next interview!



## Letter From The Executive Director– Gary Fults

### Hempy Things

#### Hemp Batteries are Eight Times More Powerful than Lithium, Scientists Discover

**Waste fibers from hemp crops out-perform graphene for a thousandth of the cost, according to new research** Is there anything hemp cannot do? A year after hemp became legal to grow in the United States, we've seen its power to make **better clothing, better buildings and medicine**. Now, there is something else hemp appears to be better at – making batteries. Most auto batteries today are made from lithium-ion, an expensive, quickly disappearing material. A team of American and Canadian researchers have developed a battery that could be used in cars and power tools using hemp bast fiber – the inner bark of the plant that usually ends up in landfill. They “cooked” the woody pulp and processed them into carbon nanosheets, which they used to build supercapacitors “on a par with or better than graphene” – the industry gold standard. Graphene is a synthetic carbon material lighter than foil yet bulletproof, but it is prohibitively expensive to make. “People ask me: why hemp? I say, why not?” inventor David Mitlin **tells the BBC**. “We’re making graphene-like materials for a thousandth of the price – and we’re doing it with waste.” Mitlin, a professor of chemical engineering at Clarkson University in New York, first published a description of his team’s battery in the journal **ACS Nano** in 2014. More recently, a YouTuber named Robert Murray Smith, whose **channel** is all about batteries and put the hemp battery to the test against a lithium-ion battery and **found it to be 8 times more powerful!** Tesla’s new **million-mile battery** is made from lithium-iron phosphate, which is supposed to last twice as long as conventional lithium-ion batteries. While more abundant and cheaper than lithium-ion, lithium-iron-phosphate still cannot compete with the apparently far-more-powerful (and renewable) hemp!

**Author: Sara Burrows**