

# JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

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## RESOLUTION OF THE JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH REGARDING ADULT USE OF ENTHEOGENIC PLANTS

Resolution No. 38-21

**Whereas**, "Entheogenic plants," a term originally classified by anthropologists and ethnobotanists in 1979, are herein defined as the full spectrum of psychedelic plants, fungi, and natural materials containing indole amines, tryptamines, phenethylamines, including psilocybin mushrooms, ayahuasca, cacti containing mescaline, and iboga; and

**Whereas**, Entheogenic plants have been considered sacred to human cultures for thousands of years, used to inspire personal and spiritual well-being, restore psychological and physical wellness, and enrich human's connection with nature. Such use has been continued by religious/spiritual leaders, practicing mental health professionals, mentors, healers, and curious individuals from around the world, many of whom have been forced underground; and

**Whereas**, Substance abuse, addiction, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), chronic depression, end-of-life anxiety, cluster headaches, tendencies toward recidivism, and other conditions challenge our community; and

**Whereas**, Both via scientific/clinical studies and within continuing traditional and religious contexts, the use of entheogenic plants has been shown to be beneficial for treating the above conditions, as well as improving mental and socio-emotional health and supporting the well-being of individuals and communities in general; and

**Whereas**, Psilocybin is a naturally occurring compound that is contained in mushroom species native to the Pacific Northwest and has been successfully used to treat depression, substance abuse, post traumatic stress disorder, cluster headaches, end-of-life anxiety for hospice and terminal cancer patients, and reduce prison recidivism; and

**Whereas**, A Johns Hopkins University study on "healthy-normals" found that psilocybin can occasion mystical-type experiences, which were considered one of the top five most meaningful experiences in a subject's life for over 75% of their subjects within the first year after the study, and found continuing positive life-style changes after a 14-month follow-up; and

**Whereas**, Iboga has been shown to alleviate treatment resistant cases of opiate and methamphetamine addiction at significantly higher rates than all other treatments for addiction. In addition, it is reported to be beneficial for addiction therapy related to specific work-related PTSD encountered by first responders such as EMT, police, and firefighters, as well as military veterans; and

**Whereas**, Entheogenic cacti that contain phenethylamine compounds such as mescaline can be beneficial in healing drug and alcohol addiction and for individual spiritual growth, and have been utilized in sacred initiations and community healings by diverse religious and cultural traditions for millennia and still as religious sacraments in modern times; and

**Whereas**, N, N-Dimethyltryptamine (DMT) is a naturally occurring compound, found in various animals, fungi, and plants, yet is listed as a Schedule I substance. Entheogenic plants or combinations of plants that contain DMT, such as ayahuasca, are reported to inspire experiences of mysticism that can be beneficial in treating addiction, depression, PTSD, and promoting personal/spiritual growth; and

**Whereas**, Psilocybin, ayahuasca, and cacti containing mescaline are regarded as non-addictive and have no known lethal doses; and

**Whereas**, Entheogenic plants are not associated with violent behavior. A study has even shown that use of psilocybin mushrooms is associated with *reduced* partner violence in men; and

**Whereas**, Entheogenic plant health and safety risks are primarily psychological and both physical and psychological risks can be mitigated through screening processes, guidance on appropriate dosages, education on safe and responsible use, access to safe spaces for effective use, and integration support; and

**Whereas**, Decriminalization allows for the mitigative factors listed above to be put in place, and importantly, to be equitably accessed and enables their use by appropriately trained practitioners as part of their psychotherapeutic services; and

**Whereas**, the risks of engaging with entheogenic plants and fungi stem more from the effects of them being criminalized than from any health risk of using entheogens themselves; and

**Whereas**, Decriminalization of entheogens helps increase the chance that anyone having a challenging experience or who has an accident or injury while using an entheogen will feel safe calling for emergency support without fearing criminal repercussions; and

**Whereas**, the so-called War on Drugs has led to the unnecessary penalization, arrest, and

**Whereas** of vulnerable people, particularly people of color and people of limited financial means, rather than prioritizing harm-reduction policies to treat drug abuse as an issue of public health; and

**Therefore**, be it RESOLVED, That the Jefferson Board of Health finds the therapeutic use of entheogenic plants and fungi to have a low probability of having an adverse public health impact and a high potential of offering a broad range of therapeutic options for those experiencing health conditions for which entheogens have proven to be beneficial; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Jefferson County Board of Health supports the removal of entheogenic plants and the psychoactive chemicals they contain from the jurisdiction of the Controlled Substances Act; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Jefferson County Board of Health supports fact-based public and professional education about the safe and responsible uses of entheogenic plants and

encourages therapists who use these compounds in their clinical practice to seek appropriate training in the rapidly emerging field of psychedelic-assisted therapy; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Jefferson County Board of Health recommends that federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies pursue a decriminalization strategy for adult use of entheogenic plants.

Approved, Adopted, and Passed this 15<sup>th</sup> Day of July, 2021

  
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Kate Dean, Chair  
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