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Obama has hinted at support for medical marijuana

President Obama, as a candidate, signaled an intention to reverse federal law enforcement policy that conflicts with states that legalize medical marijuana.

By **Bob von Sternberg**

Last update: February 10, 2009 - 5:54 PM

A major stumbling block for advocates of medical marijuana has been the federal government's refusal to countenance state laws that legalize it.

Until now. Maybe.

President Obama is on record for saying during the campaign that he would change federal drug policy in states that allow the use of medical marijuana.

"I think the basic concept of using medical marijuana for the same purposes and with the same controls as other drugs prescribed by doctors, I think that's entirely appropriate," Obama told the Mail Tribune of Medford, Ore., in March.

A year earlier at a campaign stop in New Hampshire, Obama said: "I would not have the Justice Department prosecuting and raiding medical marijuana users."

In his memoir, "Dreams from My Father," Obama described time spent as a young man struggling with questions about his race and identity, and turning to drugs including marijuana and cocaine to "push questions of who I was out of my mind."

Last week, an Obama spokesman signaled a change could be coming when a new drug czar and head of the Drug Enforcement Administration are appointed.

"The president believes that federal resources should not be used to circumvent state laws, and as he continues to appoint senior leadership to fill out the ranks of the federal government, he expects them to review their policies with that in mind," White House spokesman Nick Shapiro told the Associated Press,

If Minnesota approves medical marijuana, it would become the 14th state to do so. For a rundown on what the other 13 states have done, go to www.ProCon.org.

From the Star Tribune archives, here's a story about the medical properties of marijuana.

BOB VON STERNBERG

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Governor: Tim Pawlenty

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- Lt. Governor: Carol Molnau
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