

Charting locations of marijuana dispensaries in L.A.

6 September 2012, by Rebecca Kendall



Map of pot dispensaries.

(Medical Xpress)—With the debate over medical marijuana dispensaries in Los Angeles still in full fury, Bridget Freisthler, an associate professor of social welfare at UCLA's Luskin School of Public Affairs, has found that there are far fewer dispensaries open for business in the city than officials claim.

Freisthler's study found 472 medicinal marijuana stores in operation as of Sept. 4. That figure is in stark contrast to official reports, Freisthler said, noting that the city claims to have sent letters regarding the ban to 1,046 dispensaries.

To determine the actual number of dispensaries in operation, the researchers compiled lists using multiple electronic and hard-copy sources, including the city's finance list. These lists referenced 875 unique locations, including 762 dispensaries registered with the city. When the researchers went to these locations, they found

that only 472 were actually operating as dispensaries.

"Some of the locations we visited had previously been dispensaries but were no longer open," said Freisthler, adding that a significant portion of these businesses had never been operating as dispensaries and instead had been other businesses for decades or were addresses to postal boxes. All of the visits were made during the past three weeks.

"We spoke with an owner of one business who said he had registered with the city but was only going to open a dispensary if he got a permit during the lottery process, which was later deemed illegal and not actually conducted," Freisthler said. "We also found one location listed five times on the city finance list and registered under five different names."

The number of medical marijuana dispensaries currently in operation in Los Angeles is roughly the same as the number of bars in the city, and it represents roughly 20 percent of the number of off-premise outlets that sell alcohol, such as [liquor](#) and [grocery stores](#), said Freisthler, who received funding from the National Institute of Drug Abuse for this study.

"I make this comparison because the density of bars and off-premise outlets is related to a whole host of problems, including violent crime and assaults," she said.

In recent research published in July issue of the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, Freisthler found no relationship between the density of [medical marijuana](#) dispensaries and rates of violent or property crime.

The Los Angeles [City Council](#) has marked Sept. 6 as the date to shut down all marijuana dispensaries, but opponents of the ban last week

submitted nearly 50,000 signatures that could delay the ban pending a citywide vote.

See a [map of all the medical marijuana dispensaries](#) in Los Angeles and read more at the UCLA Luskin School of [Public Affairs](#) website.

Provided by University of California, Los Angeles

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