

DRUGS -
MARIJUANA

Local

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No charges filed yet in medical pot case

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SANTA CRUZ — Criminal charges have yet to be filed in the case of Valerie Corral, an epileptic arrested more than a month ago for growing marijuana.

An arraignment scheduled Tuesday was taken off the court calendar, and her attorney says he doubts charges will ever be filed.

Eight months ago, the District Attorney's Office dismissed an identical cultivation charge against Corral stemming from an earlier arrest.

District Attorney Art Danner said then

that Corral's case met all six elements of the necessity defense, and that she had proved no other medicines could control her seizures.

But on Sept. 21, sheriff's deputies with the Campaign against Marijuana Planting served a search warrant on Corral after spotting plants at her Davenport home during an aerial survey.

Both Corral and her husband, Mike Corral, were cited for cultivating marijuana, a felony under state and federal laws.

Wednesday, Danner said his office would ask for additional information in the case before making a decision.

Prosecutors need to know if Corral has

tried other legal drugs that could control her grand mal seizures as well as marijuana, relief which medical experts have testified to.

Her attorney, Paul Meltzer, said Wednesday he had received no official notice of what information prosecutors wanted about Corral's medical history.

"We need to know what specific drug they're talking about," he said. "One of the issues of the necessity defense is that there are none legally available at the present time. ... We've had conversations with a number of medical experts and have been told there are no legally available alterna-

tives that don't have some side effects."

Meltzer said he has examined the alternative-medicine issue as recently as 60 days ago and barring "some breakthrough," the answer should remain the same.

He maintained that other, legally available drugs have severe side effects that left his client a near-zombie.

Corral said Wednesday she was "pleased" no charges had been filed.

"But it seems such a waste of money in light of our library situation and problems at our public schools that they're still going after Mike and me."

No new court date has been set.



Valerie Corral says marijuana helps control her epileptic seizures.