

April 8, 2013

Testimony regarding House Bill 3460

My name is Cheryl K. Smith and I am Executive Director of Compassion Center and I am testifying in favor of HB 3460.

Compassion Center is a nonprofit medical marijuana clinic and educational organization in Eugene. We serve approximately 1500 patients each year, who either have or are applying for a medical marijuana card under the OMMP.

One of the biggest problems with the program, and a problem that has increased over the three years I have worked in this field, is that under the current system patients must be able to grow (and process) their own medicine or find another person to grow for them. But many cannot grow marijuana and they cannot find someone who can grow for them. I know this because we receive phone calls or patients are sent by their doctors after they obtain a medical marijuana card, and they are asking "Now how can I get my medicine?"

We hold monthly meetings for growers and patients to meet one another and hopefully reach agreement about having one grow for the other. Consistently we have many more patients than growers at these meetings. We encourage patients to share excess with other patients. We also have patients who give us their excess medical cannabis, which we then give to patients who have no access. But we have to prioritize these exchanges so that only the most severely ill or infirm people receive the limited quantity.

We need a system for legally and safely transferring medical cannabis to ALL of the patients who need it. The current system is not working. HB 3460 will create a system that works for all patients.

Compassion Center encourages patients to find alternatives to smoking medicinal marijuana and, in fact, many of our patients have never smoked in their lives. SB 3460 will also encourage the development and improvement of other ways for patients to use their medical marijuana that do not involve smoking—something that the average person cannot currently do, but a facility with professionals can do.

In relation to this, I have two recommendations for an amendment to this bill. I recommend that a) the term "usable marijuana" as be amended to explicitly include preparations such as oils, butters, tinctures and other extracts, and b) that the 24 ounces allowed to be possessed by each patient not include the weight of the product that is not attributable to usable marijuana.

Making these changes will clarify for law enforcement that these extracts are meant to be included under the statute, as well as that the weight of the alcohol in a tincture or the weight of dough in a brownie are not meant to be included when determining whether a person possesses over the legal limit.

I encourage you to pass HB 3460. Thank you.

Cheryl K Smith, Executive Director
Compassion Center
2055 W 12th Avenue
Eugene OR 97402
www.compassioncenter.net