

## Senate Committee on Health Care and Human Services

Senators,

I am writing to you regarding SB281, the proposal to add PTSD to the list of qualifying conditions for the Oregon Medical Marijuana Program.

I am a member of the City of Bend's Police Chief's Advisory Committee. I have been a member of the police committee for 13 years, and I am now serving my third Chief.

I spent over 25 years in the dental profession and as a journalist for the past eight years. I am currently the manager of the Bend MAMA clinic and have held this position for the past two years. The primary focus of the MAMA clinic is helping patients who have decided they want to register with the Oregon Medical Marijuana Program (OMMP). We help them with the process; educate the patients on safety and health concerns with using medical cannabis and the rules of the program. We also teach classes to help the patients become self-sufficient.

One unexpected element of my job at MAMA is the number of patients who would like to obtain a OMMP card for PTSD. Most who attempt to qualify with that condition are people with a background in the military and have documentation from the Veterans Administration or other health care professionals stating so. However, I am surprised how many victims of crime and other trauma also suffer from this condition. PTSD is not currently a qualifying condition on the list of conditions for the OMMP, so anyone attempting to get a card for that diagnosis is turned away.

A sad fact is that many who do suffer from this disorder also have other conditions that will qualify them for the OMMP card. Needless to say, issues related to physical pain can also manifest itself with other issues such as PTSD. Often these patients will get their card for treating qualifying conditions and discover they are also able to use their medical cannabis to control their PTSD.

Patients suffering from PTSD, but who do not have a current qualifying condition, are not being treated fairly. Those that find cannabis does give them relief either suffer with the symptoms of this condition or use cannabis illegally to treat them.

The last thing sufferers of PTSD need is an encounter with law enforcement. The Bend Police Department has been plagued with service calls related to people suffering from a slew of maladies related to mental health issues, PTSD included. This has been well documented in the local media.

Inclusion of PTSD to the list of qualifying conditions will allow all Oregonians, who suffer from this condition; to be treated equally and have legal access to a medicine has been proven to help many. For law enforcement it will create a savings with time on avoided service calls and also the financial and emotional costs to local law enforcement and the community it serves.

Please support medical professionals and their patients by including PTSD to the list of qualifying conditions. It is time all Oregonians who suffer with this condition be treated with the empathy and compassion that this most vulnerable population deserves. I urge you to pass SB 281 out of committee.

Thank you,

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