

Chair Greenlick and members of the Health Care Committee,

I oppose HB 2636. There should be no limit on the number of patients for whom a doctor can authorize any particular medication, including marijuana.

Some doctors can be expected to have a higher number of patients using marijuana because they specialize in the treatment of conditions for which marijuana is a useful medication. Likewise, gynecologists may prescribe more birth control pills than the average doctor, and endocrinologists, more insulin.

That is one reason why some doctors authorize marijuana for a high number of patients. Another reason is that many doctors won't authorize it for any. Some, because they personally oppose the use of marijuana, and some, because they work for HMO's which have policies prohibiting their employee doctors from authorizing the use of marijuana. This reduces the pool of doctors from whom patients can receive the necessary authorization, leaving a smaller number of doctors authorizing marijuana for all Oregonians who desire it.

Granted, the bill has a provision for the Oregon Health Authority to allow some physicians to authorize marijuana for more than 450 patients, but there is no indication of the conditions, if any, under which the authority will see fit to allow some physicians to have "excess" marijuana patients.

Furthermore, measure 91 means that soon any adult will be able to self medicate without a doctor's authorization, but there may be reasons why patients will still prefer to have that authorization.

If a doctor's specialty calls for a high number of marijuana authorizations, that ability should not be limited, and if his authorization is unnecessary, then limiting that ability is pointless.

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