

From: John Sajo

Sent: Wednesday, April 08, 2015 12:09 PM

To: Crawford Adam

Subject: Testimony regarding SB 479, SB 480 for April 8,2015 Hearing of the Implementing Measure 91 Committee

Dear Committee Members:

My name is John Sajo. I am the Executive Director of the Umpqua Cannabis Association. I have provided testimony to this committee previously.

We support SB 479 and SB 480 and the concept of research into the effects of marijuana generally. The ending of marijuana prohibition and the potential for increased use make it very important to advance our scientific understanding of the positive and negative effects of marijuana use. More than 3000 Oregon physicians have qualified one or more of their patients to use medical marijuana under the OMMA. Over 70,000 patients are now registered but their doctors can't prescribe marijuana. Federal law prevents this and forces state medical marijuana laws to instead rely on doctors "recommending" medical marijuana instead of writing prescriptions. But even if federal law allowed doctors to write prescriptions they would not have the knowledge base to do so. There is lots of evidence that marijuana is beneficial for certain medical conditions but very little evidence about the best formulation or dosage to be effective. Now that a wide variety of quality controlled marijuana formulations are becoming available it is important to determine which specific products are suitable for which patients and at what dosages.

Thousands of studies on marijuana's effects have been conducted over the past few decades but there are serious issues with applying this research to current needs. First, marijuana research has traditionally looked for adverse effects not potential health benefits. Second, virtually all this research used low grade marijuana produced for NIDA at one Mississippi farm. This marijuana bears little resemblance to the high grade marijuana flowers available to Oregon patients. Most of the research was conducted on smoking marijuana. Very little research has been conducted on the effects of marijuana edibles or marijuana extracts which are increasingly preferred over smoking crude marijuana.

It is unclear whether SB 479 and SB 480 merely create a board or a task force to study existing research or whether money is going to be allocated to conduct new research. We support a program that actually funds research. Colorado has such a program and recently approved \$9 million in studies. The following site lists the approved studies:

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/approved-medical-marijuana-research-grants>

SB 479 and SB 480 should specify that Oregon should coordinate with Colorado and any other states that are engaging in marijuana research.

There are many topics that could be studied:

1) Does subsidizing the cost of medical marijuana products for some qualified patients save the OHP money by reducing costs for other more expensive medicines and treatments? There are many anecdotal reports of patients who reduce or eliminate their use of many expensive pharmaceutical drugs when they have access to medical marijuana. Medical marijuana seems to be most effective and appropriate for the same demographic of patients whose OHP care is the most expensive - chronically ill, elderly and severe pain patients. It makes sense to carefully these claims of potential cost savings.

2) What are appropriate dosages for particular formulations of medical marijuana for specific conditions? The regulation and licensing of dispensaries is creating a reliable consistent supply of quality controlled medical marijuana products. Oregon doctors should have research providing guidance on dosage for specific products their patients are likely to purchase.

3) With all the discussion of tracking plants it is important to also consider tracking outcomes. Patients could voluntarily participate in a study that tracked their use of specific products on a physician suggested schedule. Epidemiological studies could analyse this data.

4) There is boom in claims about the medical effectiveness of particular products. Desperate patients can be vulnerable to opportunists and charlatans. Fraudulent or exaggerated claims should not be allowed to obscure the legitimate benefits of medical marijuana. Standards, based on science, should be established for claims of medical effectiveness.

Oregonians deserve to have the best scientific information available to make their personal choices about whether and how to use medical or recreational marijuana. Please fund research that will directly benefit Oregonians.

Thank you

John Sajo