

Chair Greenlick and members of the committee,

My husband Jake suffers from polycystic kidney disease. This an inherited disease which is fatal.

About a year ago, Jake's kidney function declined to the point where he was referred for transplant.

This is when we learned about the prohibition on those seeking transplant to use their medical cannabis.

Jake got his Medical Cannabis card about 6 years ago for lower back pain. We now realize this pain is caused by his kidneys which are each about 3 x the size of a normal. This puts pressure on his back and his other organs.

My husband's chronic condition causes pain, appetite issues, nausea and vomiting. He has trouble with sleep because laying down for more than 6 hours is painful.

All these symptoms are helped or alleviated by his medical cannabis.

The transplant center was clear that while my husband would not be allowed use his medical cannabis, he was free to use opiates. This seems irrational considering the current opiate crisis our state and nation face.

My husband abstained from using his medically prescribed cannabis in order to gain acceptance to the program. However, when sleep deprivation, pain and constant nausea became too much to bear, he used his medicine for relief and tested positive on a blood panel.

While my husband had been told that he was the perfect candidate for transplant, he was kicked out of the program. The medical director shamed us and treated my husband like a street junkie telling us how disappointed he was to learn my husband was a drug user.

I couldn't believe it. I called a patient advocate at the hospital and cited the language in SB 844, Section 8 which states "A transplant hospital may not deny a recipient from receiving an anatomical gift

exclusively on the basis that the recipient is a registry identification cardholder as defined in ORS 475.302.” The patient advocate consulted with the legal department and called me back to explain that my husband wasn’t being denied life saving treatment because he was a medical cannabis card holder but because he was a medical cannabis user. Further, she said, this center turns away 3 to 4 patients a week for this same issue. The transplant hospitals are reading this law in the narrowest terms possible. I do not believe this was the intent when this law was enacted.

Even though my husband has now provided at least 5 negative drug tests, the center will not even move forward with testing potential donors including myself until he is evaluated by an Addictions Counselor.

My husband is not an addict. He has a painful disease. We have been advised that under protocols used by licensed addictions counselors that he would be considered “psychologically addicted” because he believes that his medicine helps him.

There are 2 transplant centers in Oregon, and they both use this same protocol. If we extrapolate, this is 300 to 400 terminally ill Oregonians per year that are being denied medical treatment because they use a medicine which is legal in our state.

Other states, including Washington, Arizona, Illinois, California, Delaware, New Hampshire and Maine have laws specifically protecting their citizens from such discrimination.

Our family should not have to suffer this, nor should the other 300 to 400 families whose loved ones are turned away.

The citizens of Oregon voted and our legislature and courts have upheld and supported the use of medical cannabis especially for people facing end of life issues like my husband.

I ask this committee to make this fix because our institutions are currently out of step with our state culture at the expense of families like mine.