

Submitter: Moxie Loeffler  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary  
Measure: SB353

As an Addiction Medicine and Internal Medicine Physician, I feel concerned about the normalization of cannabis use. It is not a harmless drug, and its potency has increased dramatically over decades. While adults without mental health conditions, Attention Deficit Disorder, family or personal histories of addiction or schizophrenia may use it occasionally with little negative consequences to their health and happiness, hazardous use is fairly common.

Oregon needs a reasonable, balanced, and evidence-based plan to educate the public about the risks of cannabis use and about the very thin basis for the terms “medical cannabis” or “medical marijuana.” I meet patients regularly who tell me that they are using cannabis to treat their anxiety or insomnia, but their use pattern reveals that they are using cannabis to treat cannabis withdrawal. Using a drug to alleviate withdrawal symptoms is a hallmark of addiction and dependence. People deserve to know about these problems and how to minimize the risks to their health. They also deserve to know that cannabis can cause psychosis, anxiety, panic attacks, nausea, vomiting, dependence, motor and cognitive impairment, and that experts in various fields of medicine often disagree with claims that cannabis use is medical. In addition, pregnant women are often unaware that cannabis can be detrimental to the health of fetuses.

I do not think that cannabis use ought to be illegal. Punishing people for their health behaviors often results in poorer health and socioeconomic outcomes. I simply hope for everyone to have adequate information. If people wish to use cannabis recreationally, it is best for them to know that this is why they are using it.

Public health education can make working in medicine and educating patients much easier. With widespread messaging that is not driven by corporate cannabis advertisers, patients would be better primed to understand and assimilate quality medical advice.

Thank you for considering the impact of this market sector on public health, especially the health of children and teens, who are the future Oregonian leaders and workforce.

Best Regards,  
Moxie Loeffler, DO, MPH, Fellow of the American Society of Addiction Medicine