



Cannabis Clinicians Colorado

Denver CO 80220

February 14, 2023

Dear Esteemed Members of the Colorado Legislature -

I am writing in support of SB23-081 Access to Medical Marijuana. First off, I would like to remind everyone that **the reason Colorado has a cannabis industry – all the jobs, all the tourism, all the hundreds of millions of tax dollars – is because of cannabis patients.** Cannabis patients spent three decades asking lawmakers and voters for compassion, year after year. When we finally got the right to use cannabis as medicine in 2000, the Colorado Medical Marijuana program's success paved the way to recreational cannabis in 2014. Medical cannabis patients and their doctors opened the door to money, jobs, and an entire new industry for our state. To restrict access to medicines for the 96% of cannabis patients who are over 21 is shameful after what they have done for Colorado.

But that's exactly what happened last year: access to medical marijuana was shockingly restricted for the vast majority of cannabis patients. Mis-guided rules forcing cannabis physicians to violate their medical licenses, DEA licenses, the Controlled Substances Act, and Colorado constitution by writing de-facto prescriptions for a Schedule I listed plant. In December 2021, the Colorado Board of Health strongly objected to enacting the new bizarre and unnecessary rules, agreeing they violate the Colorado Medical Practices Act by stripping doctors recommending medical marijuana of diagnosing autonomy. Sadly, the Board of Health was overruled by the AG's office. Those new rules led to over 28% of recommending physicians quitting the practice of cannabis medicine, according to CDPHE statistics. Loss of cannabis recommending doctors lead to over 14,000 medical marijuana patients losing care, per CDPHE between December 2021 and December 2022. Loss of patients has lead to dozens of medical marijuana dispensaries closing, which then lead to many patients losing access to medical marijuana completely.

SB23-081 would restore practice autonomy for cannabis clinicians by removing the requirements that a physician's cannabis recommendation include prescriptive information on potency, products, amount dispensed, and use. Indeed, it is now and always has been impossible for a physician to give this information anyway: despite over 40,000 clinical studies on cannabis there remains no known correlation between any given dose of cannabis and any blood-level or effect in a person. Cannabis is highly individual medicine and each patient must use trial-and-error to find the appropriate routes of administration and dosages for them. This does not mean we don't counsel our patients on use – we do. I have brought along copies of the Cannabis Clinicians Colorado Medical Marijuana New Patient Success Guide used by our clinic.

The new bill will also again allow physicians to establish a bona-fide physician-patient relationship remotely via video conference for patients 21 years of age or older; under 18 years of age and with a parent or guardian; or for a patient who received a medical marijuana recommendation prior to 18 years of age. It does NOT allow telemedicine for the small number of patients who are 18-20 years old.

There is a myth circulating through the Capitol now that SB23-081 “throws away” protections for young adults that the previous law introduced. It does not. **SB23-081 KEEPS THE GUARD-RAILS UP for 18-20 year old patients.** Under SB23-081, 18-20 year old patients continue to be REQUIRED to see TWO cannabis clinicians IN-PERSON to obtain recommendations allowing them to apply for a medical marijuana card. Even after going

through 2 in-person evaluations, those 18-20 year olds still face severely restricted access to cannabis through both purchase-limits, a lack of medical-only marijuana dispensaries, and local laws forbidding 18-20 year olds from purchasing medical marijuana even in those medical-only dispensaries. The guard-rails are still firmly in place in SB23-081.

We ask again for compassion for medical cannabis patients who have lost their doctors and lost access to their medicines. We ask that cannabis health care providers be allowed to continue working hard to provide the standard of care freely chosen by their patients. Please support SB23-081.

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