

MEDICAL MARIJUANA CONSIDERATIONS

Respectfully submitted by Eugene Robert Bertolli

Dear Friends,

Before we embark on this journey to hopefully relieve the suffering from severe illnesses, we might wish to consider the following:

Regarding marijuana in relationship to Glaucoma: presently there is no effective role for marijuana in the application in treatment. Glaucoma is a progressive disease, in simple terms, where the perfusion of blood through the optic nerve is compromised, ultimately resulting in the drop out of axons-the "cables" which convey light information from the retinal receptors, to the brain where vision is experienced. Intra ocular pressure (IOP) is one factor in glaucoma. When the pressure is higher than normal, it effects the perfusion negatively at the optic nerve. In modern times, eye care professionals care for patients with glaucoma. They monitor IOP, and the axon thickness at the optic nerve with sophisticated instrumentation. With the tools of current research and treatment modalities, the condition is typically controlled under the care of well educated and trained professionals. Treatments have little or no side effects, and with more severe presentations, specialists have the best tools that modern science provides in maintaining vision.

Marijuana is not one of the successful treatments in managing glaucoma. Marijuana does decrease the IOP initially with dosing about every three hours around the clock to be effective. The patient would have to surrender their motor vehicle operators license for safety sake, and would not be safe in operating machinery. This intra ocular pressure "gain" is typically lost with tachyphylaxis, where the treatment no longer continues to be effective, and a rebound in IOP is then observed. Further more, Marijuana is thought to decrease the perfusion at the optic nerve level, potentially exacerbating the condition aiding glaucoma in further robbing precious sight. We must do no harm! In the future, we will likely see pharmaceutical treatment derived from marijuana, without the deleterious effects, without the central nervous system impairment, yet currently these derivatives do not presently exist. Marijuana for glaucoma is neither medical nor is it effective in treating this disease.

Please review the statements on Medical Marijuana from the Glaucoma Research Foundation and the Glaucoma Foundation.

Regarding medical marijuana in general, please review the position from President Obama's White House Office of National Drug Control Policy; The American Medical Association statement; The American Academy of Ophthalmology; The National Multiple Sclerosis Society; the Institute of Medicine; the National Institute on Drug Abuse; National Highway Transportation Safety Administration Drugs and Human Performance Fact Sheets-Cannabis/ Marijuana; the Narcotics Enforcement Officers Association; to name a few important sources. These should be well read as well as the costs to the state budget and to society. The Drug Enforcement Agency should also be consulted on the diversion of medical marijuana products, smoke-able and ingested such as "Budder" ending up in other states sold illegally as the purpose of altering consciousness. Once the "cat is out of the bag", will we regret this emotional, well intended measure as many in Montana are? This statement is to look at the entire picture before acting.

Most sincerely and respectfully,

Eugene Robert Bertolli
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