

# General Law Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-7287

AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE MEDICAL MARIJUANA

**Title:** PROGRAM.

**Vote Date:** 3/25/2019

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/22/2019

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Senator Martin M. Looney, 11<sup>th</sup> District

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

This bill will add marijuana to the treatment for opioid abuse. Connecticut continues to be in the top 10 for opioid deaths. The recent publication by the National Center of Biotechnology Information there is emerging evidence that cannabis could have a role in the treatment of opioid disorder as an adjunct or alternative therapy.

## **Substitute Language**

The DCP will cease charging the nonrefundable fee for administrative and application fee for each qualifying patient and caregiver under chapter 420f of the general statutes. The renewal fee will also cease under 420f. Existing regulations shall be amended.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

None Expressed

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

### **Looney, Senator Martin M., State of Connecticut,**

Connecticut is in the top 10 of opioid deaths. Though research is ongoing, there would appear to show little downside to palliative use of marijuana for opioid use disorder or withdrawal.

### **Hampton, John, Representative, State of Connecticut**

Medical marijuana is laboratory tested, there are no pesticides used and the testing ensures there is no contamination. There are concerns if adult use is legalized this would dismantle the medical marijuana program in the state.

**Mushinsky, Mary, Representative, State of Connecticut**

I support the medical marijuana program, which is well regulated. Constituents in the past year have asked for two changes in the law. They would like marijuana to be used for neuropathic relief and to bring down the cost of the very expensive cost.

**Essenter, Brian, Rph, Dispensary Manager**

There are a few points to be made regarding marijuana. No one has ever died due to an overdose of cannabis. Methadone and suboxone are just another opiate addiction. Many drug abuse counselors feel cannabis is a much safer option. Cannabis helps with the withdraw symptoms such as anxiety, nausea and jitters.

**Tomborrino, Nicholas and Al Domeika, Connecticut Pharmacists Association of Medical Marijuana Dispensaries**

We are proud of the Connecticut marijuana program and applaud the changes proposed in HB7287. We do have a concern about legalizing marijuana and its impact on the Medical Marijuana program in the state.

**Diaz, Kristina**

The cost for annual renewal is very expensive for many citizens. The renewal fee should be eliminated to help those who have debilitating conditions.

**Crawford, Mary Ellen**

**Kennedy, Steve, IAVA, CT**

**Luminary Organics**

**Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nations:** Support with amendments

**Monk, Conley**

**Monk, Garry**

**Purdon, Jennifer, Canna Care Docs**

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Dinnan, Maureen Sullivan, Chief Executive Officer, Health Assistance Intervention Education Network (HAVEN)**

At best there is conflicting evidence regarding the effectiveness of cannabis in the treatment of opioid use disorders. In our zeal to combat the opioid epidemic we must be careful not to promote all substances that could have potential abuse, including cannabis.

**Connecticut State Medical Society**

CSMS is in opposition to add Opioid User Disorder to list of conditions approved for medical marijuana. The Medical Board of Physicians has determined that marijuana is not likely to benefit OUD patients. This bill misinforms the public and has the potential to misdirect patients, adding to the burden of the disease.

