

My name is Nancy Nurge I am an APRN adult nurse practitioner for over 10 years. I am authorized by the State of Connecticut to certify patients eligible for Medical Marijuana Cards. My experience is in working with the elderly managing pain. Getting old is not easy, and from a health standpoint, it can be down right debilitating. As one of my patients stated "It isn't for sissy's". I see the pain my patients live with from arthritis, Parkinson's, back injuries and just living a long time. I provide house call visits and have seen firsthand the limiting effects of chronic pain on our elderly. I can also tell you, it is incredibly frustrating to have nothing to offer them that works without side effects, medication interaction and escalation of dosing due to long term use.

If she were here, I would want you to meet Betty. Betty is a 75-year-old female whom I started working with in November of 2018. She was referred to me by her primary care provider with a diagnosis of PTSD, chronic pain from arthritis and insomnia. Because of her PTSD, Betty qualified under the Connecticut program, without a diagnosis of PTSD and if she ONLY chronic pain diagnosis, Betty would not have qualified. Her primary care provider was concerned about Betty's continued decline due to the decline in effectiveness of her anxiety/narcotic/sleep medications. Betty had become housebound due to her conditions. Her quality of life had deteriorated to a point that she questioned whether her life was worth living. Her nephew had a medical marijuana card and recommended that Betty get one too. Luckily her primary care provider agreed.

Working with Betty and medical marijuana provided by a dispensary, Betty got her first REAL night sleep in many years. In the two months on medical marijuana she has weaned herself of ALL anxiety, pain and sleep medications. Betty is proud to be participating in the Silver Sneakers program and has started Yoga. All this is possible because of our ability to prescribe a plant! Medical marijuana is incredible for PTSD but also for chronic pain.

According to a review of by the Nation Academy of Science in 2017, I quote "there is conclusive or substantial evidence that cannabis or cannabinoids are effective in treating chronic pain in adults."

The National Institute of Health in Chronic Pain Patients' Perspectives on Medical Cannabis summary states;

"Medical cannabis patients, including two-thirds with chronic-pain, report health benefits including improved pain management and sleep."

Do we need more scientific based evidence, YES we do. And as marijuana from a federal level is moved off as a scheduled 1 drug, we will be able to gather that evidence.

But now is the time to realize the facts:

- no one has ever died from marijuana over dose.
- It is effective in helping my patients manage pain.
- it can help them improve the quality of their lives.

Help me help them – please show your support for our elderly and pass HB5442 and add chronic pain to the qualifying diagnosis for being eligible for a Medical Marijuana card in Connecticut.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this very important bill.

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