

# ACADEMY OF MEDICAL MARIJUANA DISPENSARIES



## **Testimony before the Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee April 29, 2019**

### **SB 1138 AN ACT CONCERNING COMMUNITY RESTORATION FUNDS**

My name is Nathan Tinker, and I am Chief Executive of the Connecticut Pharmacists Association (CPA). I am representing the Academy of Medical Marijuana Dispensaries (AMMD), a subsidiary of the CPA which comprises all the currently-operating medical marijuana dispensaries in the state. Together, AMMD serves more than 30,000 patients in Connecticut each month. I am submitting testimony on SB 1138, An Act Concerning Community Restoration Funds.

For the past seven years, Connecticut's Medical Marijuana Program has been nationally considered the gold standard of such initiatives. One of the hallmarks of the program has been that medical marijuana has been available tax-free to patients suffering from qualifying medical conditions.

We are concerned, however, that SB 1138 will have a lasting negative impact on the medical cannabis program. As currently written, the bill proposes a taxation system on potential cannabis retail sales (Sections 6-8), but does not explicitly exempt medical marijuana dispensaries, cultivators, or patients from this taxation scheme. Indeed, if an adult-use cannabis program becomes law, it is possible that medical dispensaries may also sell retail cannabis in the same establishment—medical marijuana should be explicitly carved out of the cannabis taxation program in order to assure that the product is clearly demarcated from recreational product.

Further, we are concerned that all the tax dollars collected by the program are to be deposited to a new Community Development Corporation Trust Fund. What this means is that none of those monies will be applied to DCP enforcement or other regulatory oversight of the adult-use cannabis industry. Diverting the totality of these funds to non-regulatory, non-oversight programs means that DCP will not have the resources or leverage to adequately and fairly supervise the recreational program, thus further undermining the operational oversight of the medical marijuana program.

As this legislation moves forward, we encourage you to call upon the medical and pharmacological expertise of the pharmacist community, which is at the core of the medical program's success. The Academy will work closely with you to design and implement a robust regulatory framework that protects medical marijuana patients, but also enables a safe and smartly managed industry for retail users.

Nathan Tinker  
CEO  
Connecticut Pharmacists Association  
Academy of Medical Marijuana Dispensaries