

ACADEMY OF MEDICAL MARIJUANA DISPENSARIES

**Testimony Before the General Committee
March 5, 2020**

Memo in support of

HB 5295 AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO MEDICAL MARIJUANA STATUTES

Senator Maroney, Representative D'Agostino and members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony regarding HB 5295. The Academy of Medical Marijuana Dispensaries (AMMD) is a special interest academy within the Connecticut Pharmacists Association and represents the majority of the 17 active medical cannabis dispensaries in the state. Together, Connecticut's dispensaries serve the health and wellness of nearly 40,000 patients. Medical cannabis is currently approved for 36 qualifying conditions in adults and 10 in patients under 18.

HB 5295 makes some needed and timely revisions to the medical marijuana statutes.

Key among these revisions is the removal of the application and annual administration fees currently levied on medical marijuana patients. Although medical marijuana is technically tax-free, these fees effectively, and unfairly, tax medical marijuana patients for their medication. No other medical treatment or therapy requires such fees, and their repeal is long overdue.

Also long overdue is the addition of chronic pain to the list of qualifying conditions. While we understand the concerns regarding adding chronic pain to the list—and that there is a regulatory process in place to review, recommend, and approve additions to the qualifying conditions list—we believe that, as it is defined in the bill (and, in fact, has also been approved by the Board of Physicians), the designation is appropriate.

However, we are somewhat confused by Section 6 which prohibits medical marijuana producers from offering “anything of value” to a licensed dispensary. It is not clear what the purpose or goal of the section is, and it may, in fact, be redundant of existing regulation.

Overall, though, we appreciate and support the relief that HB 5295 brings to Connecticut's medical marijuana patients.

Thank you for your time and consideration.