



Statement of the Connecticut Medical Cannabis Council
House Bill 5313
General Law Committee
February 2, 2021

Senator Maroney, Representative D'Agostino, Senator Witkos, Representative Rutigliano and members of the committee:

The Connecticut Medical Cannabis Council (CMCC) would like to offer comments on House Bill 5313, (Raised) *An Act Concerning Revisions to Medical Marijuana Statutes*.

CMCC is comprised of the four licensed medical marijuana producers in the state. We produce the medical marijuana that patients purchase from medical dispensaries, formulating a wide variety of different products. They are verified and validated by independent third party laboratory testing; our pharmaceutical grade medicines have helped Connecticut patients treat a variety of serious and debilitating ailments.

At the outset, we would like to acknowledge this committee and the General Assembly's fine work on the medical marijuana program in recent years. We also want to thank Governor Lamont and the Department of Consumer Protection for the very professional manner in which they have implemented the program.

When we testified on this issue one year ago, there were 40,000 patients enrolled in the medical marijuana program. In January, there were 49,592 patients, an increase of 24 percent. The program is growing, and more patients are being helped with their debilitating medical conditions.

We continue to be fully focused on doing what we can to retain Connecticut's reputation as having the very best medical marijuana program in the nation. To that end, House Bill 5313 contains several enhancements to the program that we believe make sense.

The bill eliminates application and administrative fees that patients currently pay. We believe this is a good step to take since many individuals have debilitating medical conditions that, in many cases, are very serious or life-threatening.

Patients need to be seen by a physician or APRN before they can qualify for the program. A typical office visit may cost \$100 or more. Then there is the annual registration fee (\$100), an annual renewal fee (\$100) and \$25 for a Primary Caregiver if deemed needed by the physician. As you see, these fees will quickly add up.

Further, we would like to register our concern about Section 5 of the bill. This would prohibit a producer from providing “anything of value” in the way of a donation to the dispensaries. Section 5 is unclear and may result in unintended consequences. Typically, our members might help underwrite the costs of a customer/patient appreciation day. This section would prohibit this. We do not believe that there is any problem that would necessitate the language proposed in Section 5. However, it may already be covered under existing regulation.

Finally, the bill will allow patients to have more flexibility regarding which dispensary that they use. They could obtain the medical marijuana from other than their “home” dispensary as long as the new one is owned by the same company. We suggest that the committee look at opening this up further and allowing patients to purchase their medicine from the dispensary of their choice, as long as the facility has a real-time integration with the EPDMP (electronic prescription drug monitoring program).

Thank you for considering the views of the Connecticut Medical Cannabis Council on House Bill 5313.