



February 2, 2021

Testimony in Support of HB 5313 – An Act Concerning Revisions to Medical Cannabis Statutes

Thank you Chairmen Sen. Maroney and Rep. D’Agostino and Ranking Members Sen. Witkos and Rep. Rutigliano for the opportunity to testify on HB 5313- An Act Concerning Revisions to Medical Cannabis Statutes.

As you know Connecticut’s medical marijuana program has been in existence since 2012. Now in its seventh year, a revision to the statutes is welcomed.

MPP strongly supports Section 1 of the bill. It would amend the statutes to allow for qualifying patients to purchase medication from dispensaries that have more than one location. Currently, qualifying patients can only purchase their medication from the one dispensary they are registered with. Taking into account that each dispensary receives the same supply each week, often a dispensary may run out of a particular strain or product that best works for a patient. Current law allows patients to be registered and receive medication from only one dispensary. This amendment would allow patients greater access to the medication that best works for them. This would bring medical cannabis closer to parity with pharmaceutical medications.

Section 2 of the bill would allow up to two primary caregivers for each patient. MPP supports this amendment as it would allow patients to have more than one person designated to access their medication in the event of an emergency, or extenuating circumstances. However, we would also suggest allowing institutional caregivers such as nursing homes the ability to serve as caregivers for any number of patients — and for a staffer at that facility to assist an individual patient in the facility’s care.

Section 3 of the bill would eliminate the administrative and renewal fee for patients and caregivers. MPP strongly supports this change as many Connecticut residents are coping with the economic pain brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic fees can mean the difference between paying utility bills and access to medicine.

Section 5 of the bill would prohibit the producers from offering kickback or rewards to dispensaries, unless authorized by law. MPP does not take a position on this amendment.

Sincerely,

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