



*Strengthening Individuals,
Families & Communities*

February 7, 2008

Senate Health Care Strategies Committee
Kansas State Capitol
300 SW 10th St.
Topeka, Kansas 66612

Honorable Chair Senator Wagle and Distinguished Members of the Health Care Strategies Committee:

I am writing this letter to you in opposition of the medical marijuana bill number 556. Marijuana users are trying to get their foot in the door to legalization of marijuana with this bill. I firmly believe that if this bill is passed that it will only be a matter of time until this very dangerous substance is entirely legalized.

It's a common misconception that young adults are in favor of marijuana legalization. I am 21 years old and I couldn't be more against the idea of legalization of marijuana or any other drug in any form of legalization. I went into the prevention field because I know the dangers that illicit drugs are capable of and I want to stop that from happening.

The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) is trusted to enforce the controlled substance laws and regulations of the United States. According to their research marijuana is an addictive drug that carries many harmful short-term and long-term problems. The DEA reports that there are over 400 chemicals in one marijuana cigarette and that it deposits four times more tar into the lungs than one filtered tobacco cigarette. The tar and chemicals that are being deposited into the body of marijuana users could potentially cause cancer and that is one of the diseases that patients are asking relief from. There are many other drugs that are approved by the DEA that help suppress pain and are much safer for the body than marijuana. Marijuana will do more harm than good in bodies that are already suffering from low immune systems.

Marijuana is a gateway drug to other body altering substances such as heroin and cocaine. The doctors that prescribe this addictive gateway drug to patients are in effect responsible for leading their patients to other more harmful drugs. Rehab professionals are going to have the responsibility of weaning these patients off of the prescribed drug when the patient is healed of their disease.

This bill affects more people then just the doctors that will prescribe this drug and the patients that will use it. Parents would be sending a mixed message to their children by using marijuana and then telling their children that they aren't allowed to use it. I believe that juvenile delinquency rates will rise if this bill is passed. If the support for this bill goes any further the residents and the state of Kansas as a whole will suffer greatly.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Jochem
Prevention Consultant
Regional Prevention Center of the Flint Hills
1000 Lincoln
Emporia, KS 66801



A Program of the Mental Health Center of East Central Kansas

1000 Lincoln Street • Emporia, KS 66801 • (620) 343-2211 • FAX (620) 342-1021
P.O. Box 1044 • El Dorado, KS 67042 • (316) 321-6628 • FAX (316) 321-6654