



VERMONT ASSOCIATION OF
HOSPITALS AND HEALTH SYSTEMS

November 14, 2016

Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee
Office of Legislative Council
State of Vermont
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

Re: Medical Marijuana

Dear Committee Members:

On behalf of the Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems (VAHHS), I am writing in response to the Committee's inquiry into identification of hospital policies, procedures or other barriers to patient access to medical marijuana.

VAHHS is not aware of any Vermont hospitals that have written or unwritten policies prohibiting, preventing or limiting physicians from signing the certificate to enable patients to obtain medical marijuana. To the contrary, hospitals do not interfere with the sacred physician-patient relationship. In short, it is an issue between the physician and his or her patient.

Barriers to patients obtaining marijuana for illness or pain are more likely to exist as a consequence of a tension between state and federal drug policy. It is important to remember that while medical marijuana is legal in Vermont and other states, it is still illegal under the Federal Controlled Substances Act (CSA), which makes no distinction between medical and recreational use of the drug. These disparities may create cause for concern on the part of some practitioners regarding issues of medical efficacy as well as potential or perceived risk to the practitioner's federal license.

I hope this information is helpful to the committee. Please let me know if you have any further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Tieman, President and CEO
Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems