

Proposed Amendments to S.14
Vermont's Medical Marijuana Dispensaries
House Human Services Committee
April 27, 2016

1. **Support S.14 as passed by the Senate.**
2. **Expand the list of qualifying conditions** to include glaucoma, ALS, Crohn's Disease, Parkinson's Disease, inflammatory bowel syndrome, opioid addiction and chronic debilitating pain. Vermont law is one of the more restrictive states regarding qualifying conditions. Many individuals who have significant medical conditions are prevented from obtaining medical marijuana.
3. **Amend the definition of "debilitating condition"**¹ to remove the requirement that "reasonable efforts" be made "over a reasonable amount of time without success to relieve the symptoms..." before medical marijuana can be obtained. Patients should not be forced to try conventional treatments such as opiates "for a reasonable amount of time" before being able to obtain a medical marijuana card.
4. **Eliminate the required six-month period for a doctor-patient relationship.** This requirement imposes unreasonable delays and significant costs before patients may obtain access to medical marijuana. Patients are often required to stay on pain medication because of this delay.
5. **Allow advertising by dispensaries similar to what was proposed in S.241 for marijuana retail entities.** Vermont has a very low participation rate for its medical marijuana program. Advertising is an important means for informing patients that this alternative exists. A complete ban on medical marijuana advertising almost certainly violates the First Amendment.
6. **Allow dispensaries to convert from a nonprofit to any other type of business entity authorized by the laws of this State.** Vermont dispensaries are nonprofits only in name. The federal government does not recognize them as nonprofits, so there are no tax incentives or charitable requirements at either the federal or state levels.
7. **Eliminate or reduce the \$25 fee that is charged to patients who choose to change dispensaries.** This fee creates an unnecessary financial burden for some patients.
8. **Increase the allowable purchase quantity to three ounces every 30 days.** Many very ill patients seek dosages that are higher than the two ounces per month that is allowed under current law.
9. **With approval from the Department, transport and transfer marijuana to a Vermont academic institution for the purpose of research.** The dispensaries would like to work with academic institutions to do research on cannabis and opiate addiction.

¹ 18 V.S.A. § 4472(4).