

From: seyfren@comcast.net

Sent: Thursday, March 31, 2016 12:22:11 PM (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)

To: Barbara Rachelson

Subject: legalization of marijuana: observations from a primary care doctor

Dear Representative Rachelson:

I am writing to give my perspective on the issue of legalization of marijuana from the perspective of a primary care internist practicing in Bennington, Vermont for the last 26 years. In my 26 years of practice in Vermont, I have seen remarkably little negative health effects in my patients who use marijuana. In my experience it has generally not led to psychiatric problems or use of other drugs or damage to family or job. Its use is quite common, especially in my patients under 45 years of age. This is in contrast to alcohol, which has caused serious health problems including death in the number of my patients. From my perspective, the worst thing about marijuana use is that it forces my patients who use it to interact with illegal drug dealers who often peddle much more dangerous street drugs and who sometimes exhibit other criminal behavior. I would much rather have them buying legally in a well regulated system.

My reading of the science that we do have says that it can have deleterious effects on the brain in children and teenagers, but much less so in adults. Experience in other states indicates that the edible form causes many more problems than the inhaled form. My understanding is that the bill under consideration addresses these issues.

I hope that my observations are of help in your deliberations.

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