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170 US Route 1, #200
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March 6, 2023

Re: LD 541 An Act to Create Parity in the Taxation of Medicine

Position: Support

Dear Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry, and the esteemed members of the Taxation Committee:

My name is Dustin Sulak. I am an osteopathic physician with 13 years of clinical experience treating thousands of patients with cannabis, an internationally renowned expert and educator in the field of medical cannabis, the medical director of a cannabis product company, a resident of Durham, and a devoted husband and father of three children.

I support this act to remove the current 5.5% sales tax applied to medical cannabis, which will bring cannabis into parity with prescribed medications.

Cannabis has an unusually large safe and effective dosing range. In regards to oral dosage, patients may use as little as 2 mg of cannabinoids per day and as high as 2,000 mg per day. My average patient uses 50 mg per day. Many of my patients additionally use cannabis via other routes of delivery, such as inhaled and topical.

The average price for high-quality cannabis products is \$0.10 per mg. An average patient's monthly supply may cost \$150, and many patients must spend even more on cannabis. My patients do not receive insurance reimbursement for their cannabis, and many do not have the opportunity or skills to cultivate and process their own cannabis. This bill would therefore save an average patient \$100 per year. For many patients, the savings will be much higher.

Cannabis has played a major role in improving public health in Maine, especially in regards to the opioid epidemic. In 2020, I published findings from my practice in which, among 525 subjects with chronic pain, 204 (40%) were able to use cannabis to completely discontinue opioid pain medications, and another 228 (45%) were able to use cannabis to reduce their dose of opioids.ⁱ

In addition to opioids, cannabis frequently replaces other classes of medications that are commonly paid for by insurance companies. Patients choose to use cannabis instead of prescribed drugs due to superior efficacy and fewer adverse effects. This choice has challenging economic consequences for patients, and any steps that can mitigate the financial impact would help patients.

I see no reason why medical cannabis should be taxed more than any other kind of medicine, including prescription drugs. Please support LD 541.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dustin Sulak". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dustin Sulak, D.O.

ⁱ Takakuwa, Kevin M., and Dustin Sulak. "A survey on the effect that medical cannabis has on prescription opioid medication usage for the treatment of chronic pain at three medical cannabis practice sites." *Cureus* 12.12 (2020).