



## Medical Cannabis and Nebraska

Thousands of Nebraskans and their families are depending on the General Assembly to enact compassionate medical cannabis legislation. Nebraska's medical cannabis bill, LB 110, would allow patients with doctors' certifications to use and safely access medical cannabis.

### **Cannabis' Safety and Medical Value Has Been Proven**

- Although the federal government has created unique obstacles to conducting clinical research into cannabis' benefits, studies have shown cannabis' value in treating several medical conditions and symptoms, including chronic pain, wasting, anxiety, and Crohn's disease. Research has shown cannabis can reduce reliance on opiate painkillers.
- On January 12, 2017, after reviewing more than 10,000 scientific abstracts, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine released a report that found evidence cannabis or cannabinoids are effective for treating symptoms including chronic pain, chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting, multiple sclerosis spasticity symptoms, and PTSD symptoms. It found no link between smoking cannabis and lung cancer, no physiological "gateway" effect, and no link between cannabis use and mortality, overdose deaths, or occupational accidents.
- Prescription drugs often come with far more serious side effects than cannabis, and many patients simply do not respond to them. Administering cannabis with a smoke-free vaporizer or as a sublingual tincture is a much more effective delivery method than taking pills for many patients, especially those suffering from severe nausea.
- Opiates and methamphetamine may be legally administered to patients. Why not cannabis, which has a far lower risk of dependency and does not cause fatal overdoses?

### **Broad, Bipartisan Support for Medical Cannabis**

- 77% of Nebraska voters support allowing medical cannabis, according to a February 2017 poll.
- Voters have approved medical cannabis in some of the most conservative states in the nation, including Utah, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and North Dakota.
- 69% of police officers support allowing medical cannabis. (Pew Survey, January 2017)
- The American Nurses Association, the American Public Health Association, the Epilepsy Foundation, the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, the American Academy of HIV Medicine, and many other health and medical organizations support allowing medical cannabis.
- 76% of doctors would approve medical cannabis. (*New England Journal of Medicine*)

### **Federal Law Does Not Stand In the Way**

- The decision to classify cannabis as a Schedule I drug was a political decision by Congress. Nothing prohibits states from having penalties that differ from federal law.
- Since 2014, Congress has included a rider to the Department of Justice funding bill to prevent it from intervening in medical cannabis states.

- A federal appellate court ruled that the federal government cannot punish — or even investigate — physicians *recommending* the medical use of cannabis to patients.

### **Thirty-Two States Have Laws Protecting Patients**

- Two-thirds of Americans live in a state that allows the medical use of cannabis.
- These laws are working well, enjoy strong support, and are protecting patients.
- Data have shown that concerns about these laws increasing youth cannabis use are unfounded: Teen cannabis use rates have remained stable or decreased in most states.