



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

November 20, 2009

Ben Livingston
ben@hemp.net

Dear Mr. Livingston:

You made a public disclosure request for the July 20, 2009 Medical Marijuana Petition.

I am sending the documents responsive to your request.

Under RCW 42.56.520 you may appeal any withholding by requesting a review by the Privacy Officer of the Department of Health. The request must be in writing. The mailing address is:

Privacy Officer
Washington State Department of Health
P.O. Box 47890
Olympia, WA 98504-7890

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (360) 236-4836.

Sincerely,

Michele A Ledbetter

Michele Ledbetter, Forms & Records Analyst 2 &

Health Systems Quality Assurance - Public Disclosure Records Center Department of Health - Office of
Customer Service

310 Israel Rd SE / PO Box 47865

Olympia, WA 98504-7865



Contents: Marijuana Bipolar Petition from July 20, 2009

Prepared by Department of Health Public Disclosure Request Coordinator

Document or Starting Page #	Document or Ending Page #	Information Withheld	Exemption
1	3	complainants/ patient identifiers and medical information	RCW 43.70.075, (identity of whistleblower protected) and RCW 70.02.020. & RCW 42.56.240(1) and .310 (2).

State of Washington
Department of Health
Health Professions Quality Assurance Division
1300 S.E. Quince Street
P.O. Box 47866
Olympia, WA [REDACTED] 7866
98504

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JUL 20 2009

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
MEDICAL COMMISSION

To Whom It May Concern:

Dear Washington State Medical Assurance Board;

My name is Alex Chang and I am sending this letter in regards to obtaining a license for medical marijuana. Pursuant with the Washington State Law RCW 69.51A.070, I am petitioning to add bipolar disorder, severe depression and anxiety related disorders, specifically social phobia to the list of terminal or debilitating medical conditions that under state law are allowed to be treated with medical marijuana in a controlled and regulated manner. Depression and anxiety are debilitating conditions that affect the patient's life in every aspect possible. There still remains no official means of diagnosing such medical conditions, nor has there been any known efficient or precise way of treating these disorders.

In response to the file pertaining laws RCW 34.05.461(3), RCW 34.05.470 and WAC 246-11-580 I have taken it upon myself to argue that medical marijuana can be a safe and effective treatment for depression, bipolar and anxiety disorders. Legally, marijuana is classified as a depressant, which is one of the reasons it was denied in the November 19th hearing in 2004, however I find it ironic that doctors have no hesitation in prescribing other "depressants" themselves in order to 'treat' depression. SSRI's (selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors) are themselves depressants and most patients suffer from drowsiness, fatigue, irritability, weight gain, decreased sex drive, ataxia and sleepiness, just to name some of the many side effects these dangerous and counter-productive medications have. Also, all FDA approved antidepressants carry a black box warning for possible increased suicidal ideation. Commercially advertising these drugs themselves admit they don't know how the medication affects the human mind and some medications such as lamictal have dangerous and side effects and qualities; the medication itself is one of the most commonly prescribed antidepressants, however the active ingredient (lamotrigine) binds to the melanin in the eye producing unknown lasting effects, and during testing to gain approval from the FDA there were several unexplained deaths attributed to organ failure. Lamictal also carries a high risk for developing a lethal full-body rash known as Stevens-Johnson syndrome. These are dangerous drugs

I would also like to mention that I have not heard of a single case, or know of a single person

where they have been successfully treated using the standard means of SSRI's, which specifically only works on serotonin receptors when it's been proven that norepinephrine and dopamine play just as much of a part in a person's sense of well-being.

With that being said, when marijuana is looked at as a street fix to get high, which is its unfortunate reputation, some scientists and doctors forget to look at the actual benefits a person can receive from cannabis treatment. There are those who can absolutely benefit from the well known stereotypical "marijuana experience" which undeniably improves mood, calms anxiety, promotes healthy appetite, and balances the mind. Marijuana can absolutely be used to treat bipolar patients, it takes a short time to kick in and successfully calms mania and elevates mood, abolishing depression, especially for rapid cyclers like me. As of today there exists no short-term antidepressant, and most take months to achieve the desired effect. Marijuana can do so much more than it's been given credit for, it can produce fiber, food, plastic, biodegradable oil,

To play the devil's advocate, people may argue that there is not enough substantial evidence to approve marijuana for treatment of mental disorders in the state of Washington because it is so commonly seen as a street drug that people use to get high off of and play Xbox or sit on the couch for hours. I would like to point out that is not responsible, nor medically beneficial. I completely understand the risks and concerns of using medical marijuana,

... A medicine that unfortunately gets abused and branded as a gateway drug and other unseemly names due to trafficking and other illegal activities. I would also like to appeal to separate marijuana from other schedule I drugs such as heroin, GHB and mescaline, although the line doesn't stop there. Marijuana may be illegal to possess under federal law because it's lumped together into a category of dangerous substances called "street drugs" such as cocaine, ecstasy, heroin, LSD, DMT, ketamine, etc. which provide no medical properties. The glaucoma research foundation has accepted medical marijuana as a treatment after vigorous testing, which I believe should be given for other disorders as well.

There are actual cannaboid receptors in the brain and body that help bring our ailments back in alignment ranging from chronic back pain to cancer and even epilepsy and anorexia.

An actual helpful and versatile plant should not be confused with other "drugs" such as meth and cocaine that ruin lives, promote anything but good health, ruin lives and ultimately kill. No one has ever died from marijuana in the history of the human race, but annually millions die of not just tobacco and alcohol, two legal drugs, but also the pharmaceuticals we have available are just as dangerous too.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and I hope to hear back from the Washington State Department of Health regarding this manner and look forward to working with the commission. Thank you for your time and patience.

Respectfully yours,



Alex Chang