



FRIENDS of NIDA

July 17, 2019

The Honorable Earl Blumenauer
United States House of Representatives
1111 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Andy Harris
United States House of Representatives
1533 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Blumenauer and Harris:

The undersigned national organizations are writing to strongly endorse the Medical Marijuana Research Act of 2019.

We applaud your initiative and that of your House co-sponsors to amend the Controlled Substances Act to lessen the regulatory burden and facilitate research on marijuana and its constituent compounds by qualified scientists. By creating an exception for marijuana from the current obstacles of Schedule I registration and review procedures, the bill provides a sensible streamlined approach for the review of applications and granting of registrations to conduct research with marijuana.

In addition, the bill amends the process for the Department of Justice (DoJ) approval of applications from individuals seeking to manufacture or dispense marijuana exclusively for legitimate medical research and requires DoJ to approve an application unless it is demonstrated that the issuance of such registration is not in the public interest. Understanding the characteristics of a broader range of marijuana strains/varieties, including the potency (i.e., amount of tetrahydrocannabinol in the plant) and concentration of other components (e.g., cannabidiol), will be critical for studying the health effects of marijuana use. Rigorous research into the potential therapeutic benefits and public health consequences of marijuana use will lead to more refined cannabinoid medication development through identification of target chemical constituents associated with unique behavioral or physiological effects.

Further, the bill calls for the Department of Health and Human Services to review existing medical and other research on marijuana and to report to Congress on the results of the review. The National Institutes of Health provided funding of nearly \$139 million for marijuana/cannabinoid research in 2018, and it recently convened a [Neuroscience Research Summit on Marijuana and Cannabinoids](#) to address the growing need to understand the basic pharmacology and potential therapeutic benefits of cannabinoids as well as their [deleterious effects](#). Information from that Summit complemented the findings of a report published in 2017 by the National Academy of Medicine entitled "[Health Effects of Marijuana: An Evidence Review and Research Agenda](#)." Your bill will serve one of the principal recommendations of that report by proposing strategies for addressing the current barriers to the advancement of the cannabis research agenda.

Thank you again for introducing this bill. Our organizations represent a range of scientific, professional, and patient provider and advocacy groups which may differ on policies related to the legal status of marijuana but are united in their support of scientific research.

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We are eager to assist in any way we can as this bill receives further consideration. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Geoff Mumford, PhD, directly at gmumford@apa.org.

Sincerely,

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