

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 6/8/2021

Denver, CO: On Tuesday, June 8th at 1:30 pm MST, medical cannabis patient advocates and allied organizations will gather holding a press conference calling upon the Governor to veto HB21-1317.

"Unfortunately, the General Assembly has chosen to not listen to the patient community as this bill will have negative unintended consequences for both medical marijuana patients and their physicians," said Colorado NORML Executive Director Ashley Weber. "While House Bill 1317 purports to address high-potency THC products and youth prevention, this bill will violate medical cannabis patients' privacy, limit patients' access and freedom of choice to recommended-medications, and unduly burden recommending physicians - all while failing to protect children and young adults."

While many advocates appreciated some of the last minute amendments to the bill, we still have many concerns regarding the impact this legislation would have if enacted. Specifically, HB 1317:

- * Requires authorizing physicians to provide dosing guidelines specific to the types of cannabis products that their patients may consume, the maximum potency of those products, and the daily authorized allowance of those products. No other state requires physicians to provide such explicit dosing regimens. Such regimens are unnecessary for most patients who consume cannabis to treat symptoms as needed. Many physicians are uncomfortable providing dosing guidelines and may refuse to participate in the program if required to do so.
- * Requires patients between the ages of 18 to 20 to receive recommendations from "two physicians from two separate medical practices" prior to obtaining medical cannabis. This is an unduly burdensome requirement for young-adult patients — many of whom may not have ready access to one primary care physician, much less two. The measure further requires that these patients attend follow-up appointments with at least one recommending physician every six-months thereafter.
- * Imposes changes on the production and distribution of cannabis concentrates. It limits (in most instances) the amount of medical marijuana concentrate that a patient may legally purchase in one day to 8 grams for adults or 2 grams for those ages 18 to 20. It also imposes new tracking requirements to monitor patients' purchases in a manner that violates the privacy afforded to them by the Constitution.
- * Imposes unreasonable requirements on toxicologists to make determinations regarding the recency of past cannabis exposure in subjects involved in suicides, drug overdoses, or other accidental deaths. It is well acknowledged that such a timeline cannot not be determined by the detection of either THC or its metabolite, as both substances can remain present for days or even weeks following last exposure.
- * Calls for legislative future recommendations regarding patients' and adults' access to so-called "high-potency THC" products, but never defines what constitutes "high potency." We fear that further regulatory crackdowns on these as-of-yet undefined products will only increase illicit market activity in this sector.

We further invite legislators to allow engagement in a true stakeholder process where patients are protected, not scapegoated. We are in full agreement of the need to stop abuse of the system and we are in favor of substance abuse and youth prevention efforts. Had the stakeholders process included the patients and recommending doctors in the beginning, we feel the language would be aligned with the bill sponsors' agenda of youth prevention without gutting the medical marijuana program on unconstitutional grounds.

We hope to unite with the proponents to ultimately craft common sense legislation that addresses these issues without unduly compromising patients' freedom and access, and without unduly burdening physicians and providers.

We urge Governor Polis to repudiate the misinformation surrounding HB1317 and veto this bill on constitutional and stakeholder process grounds so that a workable and constitutional bill may be enacted next session.

PLEASE BE ON TIME and WE MEET BY THE WEST STEPS OF THE COLORADO CAPITOL at 1:00 pm MST TUESDAY JUNE 8TH.

Speakers:

Ashley Weber - ED, Co NORML, Chris Chiari - VP, Co NORML, Jeri Shepherd - NLC Member, Communications Dir, Co NORML, Bridget Seritt - CPRC, Michelle Walker - ED, Safe Access Co, Jason Warf - ED, Southern Co Cannabis Council, Martha Montemayor - Marijuana for Medical Professionals, Thuy Lam - Owner, Kind Meds, Alexis Bortell, Amy Dawn Hilterbran - American Medical Refugees, Amber Wann, Brad Wann, Autumn Brooks, Mimi Friedman, and more.

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