

Meeting with Legislators

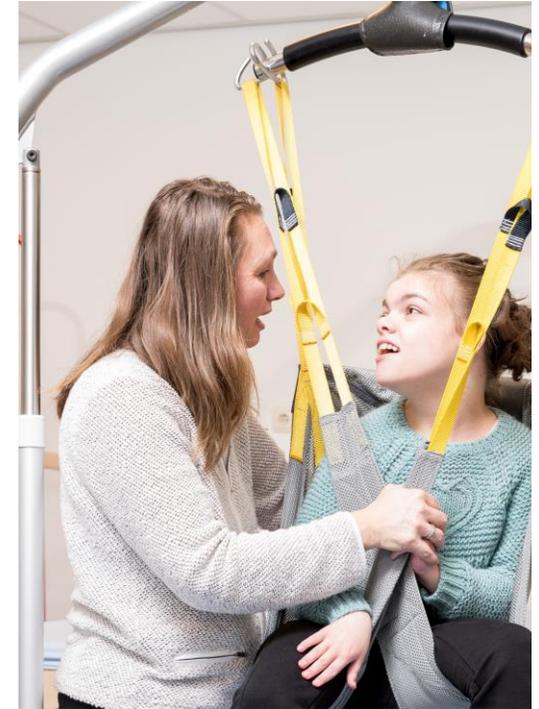
- Make an appointment!
- Familiarize yourself with the bill (SB 212/ HB 3521) and its legislative history.
- Research how the legislator has voted on related issues, such as House Bill 3559.
- Dress for success! Business attire signals you are there to discuss a serious issue. If you'll be doing a lot of walking make sure to wear comfortable, professional shoes.
- Bring plenty of business cards to leave behind. If you don't have any, make sure you leave your contact information.
- If you are advocating on behalf of a loved one, bring that person along, if possible. If not, bring a photo so they have a face to go with the story. Be prepared to discuss your loved one's condition, including how they could benefit from safe, legal access to medical cannabis.
- Provide one or two printed materials that highlight the most important points and data.
- Make a brief presentation on why you support this legislation. Start with "Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today." If you are part of a group, make sure to decide what order you will speak in, and who will cover which issues. Limit the presentation to between three and five key points. Personal stories are effective, but be conscious of time. Practice telling your story in advance, and keep to the most important points. If possible, work from notes and not a scripted speech. End the presentation with a request (i.e., Will you become a cosponsor?) Offer to answer any questions. If you do not know the answer, do not make it up. Tell them you will get back to them with that information.
- Take notes, including on the legislators.
- Always be respectful, even if their comments are upsetting. Education and compassion will change a vote, not aggressive or offensive behavior.
- Thank them again for their time and leave your contact information.
- Follow up with a thank you for your time email

Compassionate South Carolina is an educational Not for Profit (C-3) that protects the rights of patients in our state. If you would like to make a donation feel free to visit our website at www.compassionatesc.com

We encourage everyone to sign up for our newsletter to stay abreast of the happening around the state.

Compassionate South Carolina

Effectively Creating Change for a Better Tomorrow



**Educating South Carolinians
on the Compassionate Care
Act and the Medicinal
Benefits of Medical Cannabis**



A Summary of the South Carolina Compassionate Care Act (S 212/ H 3521)

Qualifying for the Program: To qualify for the program, patients must have a qualifying debilitating medical condition and a written recommendation from a physician who is responsible for the patient's ongoing care and treatment of his or her debilitating medical condition.

Patients must apply to the health department for a registration card that will allow access to dispensaries and provide legal protections. Cards must be renewed annually.

Qualifying Medical Conditions:

- Cancer
- Glaucoma
- HIV/AIDS
- Hepatitis C
- Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)
- Crohn's disease
- Ulcerative colitis
- Agitation of Alzheimer's disease
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Autism
- Idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis
- Parkinson's disease
- Neural-tube defects
- Cachexia or wasting syndrome
- Severe, debilitating pain
- Severe nausea

"Improving Patients' Quality of Life, While Still Protecting our People" ~CSC

- Severe nausea
- Seizures
- Neurological disorders
- Severe and persistent muscle spasms

The bill would also create a Medical Cannabis Review Board, which would consider petitions to add other serious conditions to the program.

Limitations: A patient or caregiver may purchase or possess up to two ounces of dried cannabis per patient, per 14-day period. The Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) will determine limits for an equivalent amount of cannabis products, such as oils, during the regulatory process. Cardholders who violate the law can have their ID cards revoked or suspended and, where applicable, face criminal penalties. Medical cannabis establishment employees who violate the act will be subject to penalties as determined by DHEC, in addition to criminal penalties where applicable. Patients will not be allowed to grow their own cannabis.

Legal Protections: The bill protects patients, caregivers, medical cannabis establishment staff, state-chartered banks, attorneys, accountants, doctors, and anyone who associates with those individuals from arrest, prosecution, or penalties for actions allowed by the medical cannabis bill. It also protects registered patients from discrimination in child custody disputes and eligibility for organ transplants.

Cannabis is a Safe and Effective Treatment Option

On January 12, 2017, after reviewing more than 10,000 scientific abstracts. The National Academies of

Science, Engineering, and Medicine released a report that found there is substantial or conclusive evidence that cannabis is beneficial in the treatment of chronic pain. It also 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.

Cocaine, morphine, 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?

Twenty-Nine States Have Laws Protecting Patients

- 62% of Americans live in one of the 29 states that allow the doctor-advised medical use of cannabis.
- These laws are working well, enjoy strong popular support, and are protecting patients. There is Broad Support for Allowing Medical Cannabis
- 78% of South Carolina residents (2016 Winthrop Poll, The State)
- 69% of police officers support legalization of medical cannabis (Pew Survey, January 11, 2017)
- 76% of doctors would approve medical cannabis (New England Journal of Medicine) Medical Cannabis and the Opioid Crisis
- Allowing people who suffer from chronic pain to use marijuana helps reduce opiate use. A recent study found a 48% reduction in patients' opioid use after three months of medical marijuana treatment.
- A survey of 542 patients using cannabis in addition to opioids found that 39% reduced their opioid dosage and another 39% stopped using opioids altogether.
- Health Affairs reported that doctors in a state where marijuana was medically legal prescribed an average of 1,826 fewer doses of painkillers per year to patients enrolled in Medicare Part D — which resulted in significant cost savings. Scientists have found that when cannabis is used in combination with prescription opioids, it increases their pain-relieving properties, so patients can reduce their dosage.

For further information concerning the Compassionate Care Act visit our website at www.compassionatesc.com