

March 28, 2024

Kansas Senate Bill 555

PROPONENT

Written-only Testimony by Bryon McNeil, MD, Board Certified Emergency Medicine Physician, U.S. Navy Veteran.

Chairman Thompson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Bryon McNeil, I am an emergency medicine physician, Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine at University of Kansas School of Medicine and Adjunct Clinical Associate Professor at Kansas College of Osteopathic Medicine. I am a U.S. Navy Veteran with multiple deployments and operational tours in support of the Gulf War where I served in various clinical and leadership roles. I am a proponent of Senate Bill 555.

I have been a Chief Medical Officer, and Medical Director for multiple Level 1 trauma centers over my twenty plus years in the emergency department. I have seen almost anything that can be imagined. Unfortunately, I often see people at their worst, including when they're suffering from the effects of drug and alcohol abuse. I see the effects of fentanyl, methamphetamines, heroin, and alcohol nearly every night I work in the emergency department. I can tell you that I see very few, if any, cannabis related patients in the emergency department. Approximately once or twice a month, I will have a patient with cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome which is repeated vomiting caused by excessive cannabis consumption. This condition is not dangerous or lethal if the patient is kept hydrated. That is the extent of the negative health consequences of cannabis use that I see, and it is fairly rare; certainly much rarer than what I see from substance use disorder, alcohol, and prescription drugs, and far less dangerous.

The emergency department is an excellent indicator of what works in society, and what doesn't. If we are seeing people regularly because of a certain condition, accident, or drug, then there is an underlying societal problem. Alcohol, methamphetamines, and opioids are drugs that take a heavy toll on our society, young and old. The emergency department reflects that. Cannabis, on the other hand, is simply not hurting people as the others do, and certainly not killing them as the others are.

I have seen first hand with friends, family, and other Veterans the benefits that cannabis can have with patients suffering from pain, and seizures. It is certainly safer than using prescription opioids. There is a reason that the Food & Drug Administration reported this past year that cannabis has a currently accepted medical use. The fear surrounding cannabis is simply not rooted in reality. Having seen patients at their worst, I am saying with good certainty that cannabis is not as dangerous as cannabis opponents say.

I ask that you vote YEA on SB 555, and give Kansas patients the medical freedom to choose cannabis over prescription opioids.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bryon McNeil, MD, FAAEM  
Wichita, KS  
Tel: 316-214-5574  
Email: bmcneilmd@cox.net