Support for the Medical Marijuana Research Act of 2019

U.S. Representatives Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), Andy Harris, M.D. (R-MD), Zoe Lofgren (D-CA), H. Morgan Griffith (R-VA), Debbie Dingell (D-MI), and Rob Bishop (R-UT)

Smart Colorado:

Attributable to Diane Carlson,Co-Founder & National Policy Director, Smart Colorado:

"We applaud the leadership of the congressional sponsors of The Medical Marijuana Research Act of 2019. They are from states that, like Colorado, have experienced the realities of marijuana legalization and know just how critical the need for more marijuana research is.   For years Smart Colorado and its community partners and supporters have advocated for much-needed research to address information gaps. We believe this research is particularly important when it comes to today's new and very different marijuana products and unprecedentedly high THC potencies. This research could help protect kids and inform adults.   In Colorado there is no age restriction when it comes to medical marijuana; that makes the need for sound science on its potential risks and benefits even more imperative. Just this past legislative session, Colorado state legislators overwhelmingly voted for marijuana potency to be studied, a goal that is supported by this congressional legislation. Again, we are grateful for the leadership provided by the sponsors and urge others to support The Medical Marijuana Research Act of 2019, which has important and far-reaching nationwide implications."

Smart Approaches for Marijuana (SAM Action):

"Dr. Harris is a leader in responsible research into medicines that could be derived from the marijuana plant, and we are glad to see him reintroducing this important bill. We hope that Congress will move swiftly to pass it and reduce barriers to researching marijuana to produce new FDA-approved medicines," said Kevin Sabet, PhD, President of Smart Approaches to Marijuana Action (SAM Action).

American Psychological Association (APA):

Attributed to Arthur C. Evans Jr. PhD, CEO of the American Psychological Association:

 "Scientists who have been discouraged from studying cannabis because of the hurdles associated with the registration process, redundant protocol reviews and security requirements will be encouraged by this bill, which greatly simplifies the whole process. Psychologists are interested in studying a wide range of scientific questions related to the use of real-world cannabis products, including cannabis use disorder, cognitive impairments, risk for psychosis and motor vehicle impairment, and the potential therapeutic uses for cannabis derivatives. Without access to an expanded range of cannabis products, scientific research cannot hope to keep pace with the expanding recreational and medicinal cannabis marketplace. This bill will facilitate the rapid approval of applications to manufacture cannabis products from non-government sources, resulting in a supply that can meet the needs of cannabis researchers."

Biopharmaceutical Research Company (BRC):

Attributed to George Hodgin, former Navy SEAL and founder and CEO of Biopharmaceutical Research Company (BRC):

"For three years, I have waited for approval from the Drug Enforcement Administration to grow cannabis strictly for government-sanctioned research purposes. I have built a facility in compliance with federal regulations and hired a team ready to work, but we are stalled by federal bureaucracy.

With thorough research and testing, patients across America could potentially benefit from medicinal cannabis, including many of my fellow veterans who struggle with chronic pain and post-traumatic stress. Lawmakers will also benefit as they consider policy to address the possible negative health consequences that can only be adequately understood through advanced research. The Medical Marijuana Research Act is an important step toward removing federal barriers to cannabis research, and I urge the Judiciary and Energy & Commerce Committees to promptly advance this bill."

Marijuana Policy Project (MPP):

"There isn't much that the Marijuana Policy Project and Congressman Harris agree on when it comes to the federal government's position on cannabis, but we applaud his sponsorship of the Medical Marijuana Research Act of 2019 which would reduce the barriers to cannabis research. The fact that such a bill is even necessary points out how out of touch the feds actually are," said Don Murphy, director of federal policies. "We stand with patients in calling for the best science available to determine marijuana's true medicinal value. We would add however that while this research is being conducted, patients should be given the care and compassion they deserve, not hand cuffs and convictions."

American Academy of Neurology (AAN):

"Many conditions that are the focus of potential medical cannabis treatments are neurologic in nature. However, neurologists are left with little scientific research to make appropriate prescribing decisions for their patients. The Medical Marijuana Research Act will help facilitate rigorous research that is needed to determine whether medical cannabis is an appropriate treatment option for neurologic disease," said James C. Stevens, MD, FAAN, President of the American Academy of Neurology.

July 16, 2019

The Honorable Andy Harris, MD
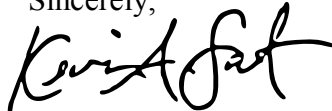2334 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

I write on behalf Smart Approaches to Marijuana Action (SAM Action). SAM Action is the affiliated 501(c)(4) of SAM, the leading, non-partisan national organization offering a science-based approach to marijuana policy. SAM was founded by former Congressman Patrick Kennedy, senior editor of *The Atlantic* David Frum, and myself, a White House advisor to the three U.S. administrations.

SAM Action supports the Medical Marijuana Research Act, legislation you have sponsored to facilitate legitimate research into the medicinal components of the marijuana plant. We have supported legitimate research as recommended by the National Academy of Sciences and National Institutes of Health into FDA-approved medications derived from marijuana since our inception, and SAM has published guides such as "Researching Marijuana's Medical Potential Responsibly: a Six Point Plan" promoting this approach. The Medical Marijuana Research Act (MMRA) would further these goals, and we urge Congress to take up and pass this legislation.

In working with stakeholders who conduct research into the hundreds of cannabinoids present in the marijuana plant, including medical researchers on SAM's science advisory board, we have been made aware of difficulties in the research process that can interfere with researching medicines that may be extracted from raw, plant-based marijuana. The MMRA takes a measured and thoughtful approach to reducing these barriers, without rescheduling or descheduling marijuana.

SAM Action looks forward to working with your office and other stakeholders, including medical researchers and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), to ensure marijuana is not illegally diverted and is used only for legitimate research purposes. Thank you again for your diligence and care as you work to foster responsible, legitimate research for the benefit of all.

Sincerely,

Kevin A. Sabet, Ph.D.
President
SAM Action

NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

JONATHAN F. THOMPSON
Executive Director and CEO

July 15, 2019

The Honorable Andy Harris (MD)
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Harris:

On behalf of the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) and the more than 3,000 elected sheriffs nationwide, I write in support of the Medical Marijuana Research Act. We believe that this bill is the necessary first step in the conversation of legalizing marijuana.

While the National Sheriffs' Association oppose efforts to legalize medicinal and recreational marijuana, we urge Congress to take the action necessary to ensure greater research on cannabis in order to make an informed decision. This bill will remove regulatory research barriers in a safe and effective manner. These barriers have undermined the ability to obtain clear, well-researched scientific evidence relevant to the use of cannabis for medical purposes and have prevented research that will lead to the ability to accurately quantify impairment levels of those who consume cannabis

The National Sheriffs' Association applauds your effort to push for further medicinal cannabis research before hastily legalizing marijuana on the national level. We believe this common-sense approach will allow trained professionals access to funding and resources required to ensure that law enforcement has the safeguards they need to protect their communities.

Sincerely,

Jonathan F. Thompson
Executive Director and CEO

CC: Representative Earl Blumenauer
Representative Morgan Griffith
Representative Mike Bishop
Representative Zoe Lofgren
Representative Debby Dingell

FRIENDS of NIDA

William L. Dewey
Friends of NIDA
Post Office Box 980613
Richmond, VA 23298-0613
wdewey@vcu.edu
804.827.0375

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Sue Thau
*Community Anti-Drug
Coalitions of America*

Frank J. Vocci
*Friends Research
Institute, Inc.*

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.

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,

American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry
American Academy of Neurology
American Brain Coalition
American College of Neuropsychopharmacology
American Psychological Association
American Society of Addiction Medicine
American Society of Anesthesiologists
Child Neurology Society
Entertainment Industries Council EIC
Friends of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
Friends of the National Institute on Drug Abuse
National Ataxia Foundation
Research Society on Alcoholism
Treatment Communities of America

July 2, 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:

We applaud your leadership and that of your 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.,
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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 advances 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. 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 Dr. Geoff Mumford, APA's Associate Executive Director for Science Government Relations, at gmumford@apa.org or 202.336.6167.

Sincerely,

Russell Shilling, Ph.D.
Chief Scientific Officer

Katherine B. McGuire
Chief Advocacy Officer

July 15, 2019

The Honorable Andy Harris
United States House of Representatives
2334 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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

Dear Representatives Harris and Blumenauer,

The American Academy of Neurology (AAN), the world's largest association of neurologists representing more than 36,000 professionals, is strongly committed to improving the care and outcomes of persons with neurologic illness in a cost-effective manner. We would like to express our support for the Medical Marijuana Research Act of 2019.
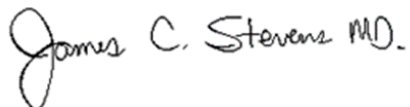
One in six people live with a brain or nervous system condition, including Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, stroke, epilepsy, traumatic brain injury, ALS, multiple sclerosis, and headache. State legislatures and regulatory agencies have taken the first steps to making medical cannabis products available to patients. Nearly all conditions approved for medical cannabis prescriptions are neurologic in nature, and many patients visit their neurologist with requests for these products. However, neurologists are left with little scientific research to make appropriate prescribing decisions for their patients. Furthermore, many physicians are reluctant to approve their patients for medical cannabis due to the discrepancies between state and federal law.

Patients and physicians need medical cannabis research to determine whether it is an appropriate treatment option for neurologic disease. Without this critical research, patients with neurologic disease will not be able to access potentially life-changing treatment. Physicians also need clarity on the divergent legal landscape so that they may appropriately prescribe any safe, effective, and approved cannabis-derived therapies supported by medical research.

The AAN applauds your efforts to support research on medical cannabis and its potential impact on patients living with devastating neurologic disease. Many of these sentiments are included in our Medical Marijuana Position Statement, which was driven by member concerns on the lack of research available on marijuana products and the impact of the ambiguous environment on patients and physicians.

Thank you for taking a leadership role on this critical issue. If you have any questions or requests for additional information, please contact Derek Brandt, Director, Congressional Affairs, at *dbrandt@aan.com.*

Sincerely,

James C. Stevens, MD, FAAN
President, American Academy of Neurology

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PRESIDENT-ELECT
Maria A. Oquendo, M.D., Ph.D.

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(19-21)

Trevor W. Robbins, C.B.E., FRS, Ph.D.
(19-21)

Sarah S. Timm, CAE, CMP-HC
Executive Director

ACNP EXECUTIVE OFFICE
5034A Thoroughbred Lane
Brentwood, TN 37027
Tel: (615) 324-2360
Fax: (615) 523-1715
acnp@acnp.org
www.acnp.org

American College of Neuropsychopharmacology

July 11, 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 American College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ACNP) endorses and supports the Medical Marijuana Research Act of 2019 which amends the Controlled Substances Act that aims 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 streamlined approach for the review of applications and granting of registrations to conduct research with marijuana.

In addition, the bill amends the process of application approval from individuals seeking to manufacture or dispense marijuana exclusively for legitimate medical research from the U.S. Department of Justice unless it is demonstrated that the issuance of such registration is not in the public interest. This legislation will provide an annual assessment whether there is an adequate and uninterrupted supply of research-grade cannabis and be sure that there are at minimum four federally approved manufacturers at any given time. Currently, institutions that want to research cannabis, cannot as cannabis research poses a threat to their federal funding. This legislation provides refuge for researchers and institutions studying cannabis as well as the patients in medical cannabis clinical trials. This legislation will not interfere with the federal laws, state laws or local law enforcement and does not change the legal status of cannabis, but solely unlocks the potential for brain and behavioral research that could be beneficial to chronically ill persons.

Furthermore, 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.". This 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.

As background, the ACNP is a professional organization of leading brain and behavior scientists. The principal functions of the College are research and education. Our goals in research are to offer investigators an opportunity for cross-disciplinary communication and to promote the application of various scientific disciplines to the study of the brain's effect on behavior, with a focus on mental illness of all forms. The College is an honorific society of just over 1200 members. Members are selected primarily on the basis of their original research contributions to the broad field of neuroscience. Founded in 1961, the membership of the College is drawn from scientists in multiple fields including behavioral pharmacology, brain imaging, chronobiology, clinical psychopharmacology, epidemiology, genetics, molecular biology, neurochemistry, neuroendocrinology, neuroimmunology, neurology, neurophysiology, pharmacology, psychiatry, and psychology.

Thank you again for introducing this bill. 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 Sarah Timm at stimm@acnp.org.

Sincerely,

Sarah S. Timm, CAE, CMP-HC
Executive Director
American College of Neuropsychopharmacology