

Senate Health and Human Services Committee

Kyle Baker 271-2609

SB 17, relative to treatment for hepatitis C under the law relative to use of cannabis for therapeutic purposes.

Hearing Date: January 10, 2017

Time Opened: 2:45 p.m.

Time Closed: 3:00 p.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Bradley, Avard, Gray and Hennessey

Members of the Committee Absent: Senator Fuller Clark

Bill Analysis: This bill clarifies hepatitis C as a qualifying medical condition for the use of cannabis for therapeutic purposes.

Sponsors:
Sen. Reagan

Who supports the bill: Matt Simon, Marijuana Policy Project; Devon Chaffee, ACLU-NH; Gary Woods, Temescal Wellness; Dan Stockwell; Robert Reinhard; Dan Mcguire, NH Liberty Alliance; Rep. Al Baldasaro, Rock 15; Rep. Robert Cushing, Rock 25

Who opposes the bill: Kate Frey, New Futures

Who is neutral on the bill: Michael Holt, DHHS

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Senator John Reagan – Senate District 17

- This bill removes a restriction on patients suffering with Hepatitis C from accessing medical cannabis. Current law requires that a patient with Hepatitis C be undergoing anti-viral treatment to qualify for the cannabis program. There are many situations where patients cannot undergo anti-viral treatments or have already undergone anti-viral treatments but are still suffering. This change still requires a patient to have a qualifying symptom in order to be eligible for the cannabis program.

Sen. Bradley – So this bill just strikes the anti-viral language?

Sen. Reagan – Yes

Dr. Gary Woods – Temescal Wellness

- Support
- There may be some concern about the idea that all patients with Hepatitis C will be eligible but that is not true. Current law requires that a patient have both a qualifying medical condition and a qualifying symptom. This bill would just remove the treatment requirement from the qualifying condition of hepatitis C.

Gail Devoid PhD – Cannabis Researcher

- There are 90 different diseases that can be treated with cannabis. We need to leave the discretion to doctors to choose what treatment plans are best for their patients and remove treatment requirements from the law.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition: None

Neutral Information Presented:

Michael Holt – DHHS – Administrator for Cannabis Program

- Hepatitis C is the only qualifying condition with a treatment requirement
- There are patients that have gone through the anti-viral therapy but are still very sick and not able to access the program.
- There are also patients that cannot undergo anti-viral treatments and cannot access the program.
- This would effect a very small population only 12 patients in the program with Hepatitis C

Future Action: Ought to Pass

KRB

Date Hearing Report completed: January 13, 2017