

Senate Bill 2284- In Opposition
Human Services Committee
Sixty-seventh Legislative Assembly of North Dakota
February 9, 2021

Dear Chairman Lee, Vice Chair Roers, and Senate Human Services Committee members,
My name is Joan Connell. As a pharmacist-trained pediatrician and parent, I urge you to vote "DO NOT PASS" on SB 2284, which would amend current legislation on pediatric medical marijuana to make a combustible form available to children as well as leave it to the discretion of the caregiver to modify a marijuana product to contain up to 6% tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). Combustible marijuana damages lung tissue. The American Lung Association has published a document describing the many damaging effects of marijuana on the lungs <https://www.lung.org/quit-smoking/smoking-facts/health-effects/marijuana-and-lung-health>. Imagine what the mechanisms of toxicity described in this publication will do to the growing and developing lungs of children. Just within the last few weeks, one of my pediatric asthmatic patients has required care in the emergency room due to an asthma attack resulting from smoking marijuana.

Expecting that caregivers of a medically complex child also become skilled pharmacists/chemists/mathematicians capable of diluting out products to "create" a medical marijuana product that does not exceed 6% THC is unreasonable, unrealistic, and unnecessary- as well as makes no sense, assuming that those requesting a change to this part of the legislation are concerned about the well-described adverse effects of exposure to potent THC products on a child's mind and body. I have included a link to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry's statement on use of medical marijuana in pediatric patients with autism spectrum disorder https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Policy_Statements/2019/Use_of_Medical_Marijuana_in_Children_and_Adolescents_with_Autism_Spectrum_Disorder_for_Core_Autism_S.aspx which advises against use of medical marijuana products due to current lack of scientific evidence of efficacy combined with the myriad of scientific evidence regarding damaging effects of this drug on the developing brain.

Finally, as a parent and pediatrician, I am sickened by history repeating itself. Here is a link to a document that describes the history of tobacco marketing <https://stopswithme.com/history-tobacco-marketing-scary-story/>. Big-Marijuana continues to dupe us by using the same playbook as the tobacco industry used decades ago. Have we learned nothing? I encourage you to take a look at this and consider what role you (want to) play in Big-Marijuana's game of normalizing and promoting utilization of an addictive drug that has adverse consequences on multiple organs of the body.

Thank you for considering my testimony. As always, I am available via this email address for any further questions/discussion.