

# HC Resolution 5: Best path forward – **CALL!**

Keep the good (medications) and eliminate the bad (contaminants, hallucinogens, etc.) In other words, do the **RESEARCH FIRST!**

Kentucky legislators are preparing for what will likely be a hot debate over a plant. Two bills to legalize marijuana and a resolution to expedite new marijuana medications were filed the first week of the 2019 General Assembly.

Currently, the federal government categorizes marijuana as a controlled substance and bans its use except for extracts that have gone through the research and approval process. However, many individual states have ignored federal law and acted on their own to legalize either “medical marijuana” or “recreational marijuana.”

“Medical marijuana” means the ingestion of all or part of the plant by smoking, vaping, swallowing or absorbing in some form. Generally, in states where it



has been legalized, a doctor’s recommendation allows people to grow marijuana for personal use. Others can be licensed to grow and sell the plant.

“Medical

**“There are likely additional medications that can be developed. We just want them to go through the same process as every other medication to ensure people are helped, not harmed.”**

– Joyce Ostrander, policy analyst  
The Family Foundation

marijuana” supporters point out that the plant has medicinal purposes and insist that those benefits cannot be gotten from any other medicines as effectively as from ingesting or smoking marijuana. They claim that if “medical marijuana” is not legalized, pain and suffering will continue unnecessarily for many Kentuckians.

Despite claims that marijuana is not available in Kentucky, the facts are that three marijuana derivatives have been successfully extracted, properly researched, tested and approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and are available by prescription. A fourth is in clinical trials seeking approval.

In addition, hemp and its extract, CBD oil have recently been legalized. CBD oil is one of the substances in marijuana that proponents claim is an effective medication.

Opponents of both “medical” and recreational marijuana have serious concerns about questionable benefits and the adverse effects on the individual and the community.

Data is coming in from states that have legalized the plant and opponents cite disturbing trends linking marijuana use to increases in truancy, driving under the influence,

emergency room incidents, psychotic events (particularly in young adults) and even suicides. Marijuana today is far more potent than it was 20 years ago.

For doctors, legalization creates an ethical dilemma, one reason most are not supportive of legalizing marijuana. Physicians would be pressured to recommend something “blindly,” meaning proper prescribing guidelines such as dosing, drug interactions and adverse effects have not been established. There is also the risk of not knowing the contaminants and potency since chemical concentrations vary. Furthermore, to prescribe any controlled substances, physicians must be registered by the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and, according to the DEA, “medical marijuana” is illegal.

Medical professionals agree that many medications are plant-based but note they have been extracted, refined, tested and properly dosed. “If a patient has a bacterial infection a physician prescribes penicillin. She does not tell the patient to go eat a loaf of moldy bread,” said Joyce Ostrander, policy analyst for The Family Foundation and a licensed health professional. “Likewise, to treat malaria doctors prescribe one of several medications containing quinine. They don’t tell patients to chew on the bark of the cinchona tree.”

Of great concern is the impact on the 18 to 25-year-old population and those who may be vulnerable to mental health and respiratory issues. Research indicates that their use of marijuana dramatically increases the onset of serious mental health disease (i.e., schizophrenia and bipolar disorder) and/or the incidence of psychotic episodes and depression. Consistently, professional articles warn of danger, question the effectiveness and call for more research.

“There are likely additional medications that can be developed,” said Ostrander, “We just want them to go through the same process as every other medication to ensure people are helped, not harmed.” House Concurrent Resolution 5 directs the federal government to expedite that process.

***The cannabis plant (marijuana) MAY contain good medicinal chemicals within it, but those chemicals must be researched and evaluated so they can be used safely and responsibly.***

***Call 1-800-372-7181***

**Call the toll-free Legislative Message Line and leave this message for “all the legislators from my county” (State Senators and Representatives) and copy this message to Senate President Stivers and House Speaker Osborne.”**

***“Please pass House Concurrent Resolution 5. It requires expedited FDA research and safe guidelines before any legalization.”***

## Recreational marijuana???

“Recreational marijuana” means the legalization of the plant to use for any reason, with few restrictions (i.e., use by minors or driving under the influence).

Recreational marijuana supporters claim that taxes on marijuana would be a good source of revenue for the government. They argue that Kentucky has missed the opportunity to glean significant revenue from casinos and so should act now and legalize recreational marijuana while there is still a window of opportunity for it to yield big profits. However, according to an October 2018 *New York Times* article, regulations drive the cost up, resulting in both businesses and consumers preferring to buy illegally. Using California as an example, the cost to consumers for “legal” pot is up to 77 percent higher than what is on the black market.

Supporters say recreational marijuana is no worse than alcohol.

Opponents point out the serious dangers (see article above) and claim that greedy large business profiteers are actually behind the recent push in the Kentucky legislature and those profiteers are ignoring the devastating health, social and economic impacts of legalizing marijuana. In a November 2018 article, *Forbes* magazine estimated that Michigan’s recreational legalization (in December 2018) would bring 1.4 to 1.7 billion dollars in annual sales in Michigan alone.