



Minnesota Psychiatric Society

Improving Minnesota's mental health care through education, advocacy, and sound psychiatric practice, and achieving health equity.

September 27, 2021

Re: Expansion of Medical Cannabis to include Anxiety as a treatable disorder

Dear Commissioner Malcolm:

The Minnesota Psychiatric Society (MPS), NAMI Minnesota, representing nearly 500 Minnesota psychiatric physicians, opposes the proposed expansion of the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) medical cannabis program to include patients diagnosed with anxiety.

MPS has taken a position to caution the public and governmental agencies about the harms of cannabis and its lack of efficacy in treating anxiety. The enclosed position statement details the organization's position opposing authorization of the use of medical cannabis for treatment of every and all anxiety disorders. We base our position on the following points:

1. Anxiety is a treatable condition.
2. It can be treated with non-addicting medications and psychotherapy. For some forms of anxiety, psychotherapy is the preferred treatment. Treatments are readily available through in-person or telemedicine.
3. Cannabis is not a benign drug. Its use causes a significant amount of addiction, and it also causes a number of psychiatric disorders.
4. Some psychiatric disorders are destabilized by cannabis to the point that the person may require hospitalization.
5. Cannabis may be a cause of psychosis.
6. Recent data suggests that there may be significant cardiovascular morbidity and mortality associated with cannabis.
7. Cannabis has no proven efficacy in the treatment of anxiety or any other psychiatric disorder.

Thank you for your attention to this letter and please look for additional science-based materials that will be sent to you by many of the undersigned organizations. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely yours,

Handwritten signature of Chinmoy Gulrajani in black ink, with a horizontal line underneath.

Chinmoy Gulrajani, MD, DFAPA
MPS President

Handwritten signature of Michael Trangle in black ink.

Michael Trangle, MD, DLFAPA
MPS Legislative Chair

CC: Governor Tim Walz