



September 20, 2017

Virginia Pressler, MD
Director, Hawaii Department of Health

Testimony in support of adding Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) as a debilitating condition to Hawaii's Medical Use of Cannabis Program

Dear Director Pressler,

Thank you for considering the addition of ALS to Hawaii's Medical Use of Cannabis Program.

I strongly support the addition of ALS as a debilitating condition to Hawaii's program because of the benefit that cannabis provided to my late best friend during his grueling five year battle with this disease; a battle that would have been unbearable had it not been for the concomitant medical use of cannabis.

As the submitted petition establishes, there is also clear documentation in the peer-reviewed scientific literature of sufficient benefit and safety to justify adding ALS to Hawaii's program.

I can think of no other uniformly fatal disease that is so well suited for the medical use of cannabis. While ALS patients in Hawaii may already be getting certified for Hawaii's program once they begin experiencing chronic severe pain and degenerative muscle spasms, I believe that it is medically unethical to make these patients wait for such symptoms to occur, especially with the evidence that the medical use of cannabis may slow the progression of this disease.

In my professional opinion, once a diagnosis of ALS is established, patients should have the option to initiate the medical use of cannabis immediately.

I hope you will come to the same conclusion.

Sincerely,

Clifton Otto, MD