

Good Morning Karen,

I am a caregiver living in Eugene with my husband Jeremiah who has brain cancer.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit email testimony and thank you for reading it.

My husband has used cannabis medicine for the past two years. His quality of life has improved dramatically, which I attribute mainly to his use of medical marijuana. Jeremiah was despondent and depressed three years ago when we moved to Oregon. This intelligent man, possessing five college degrees, was unable to enjoy simple pleasures in life, such as reading, because it was too difficult for him to concentrate. I am pleased to report that he is currently reading several books, along with newspaper and magazine articles. What a difference this has made in our life!

His cognition and even his eyesight, damaged by the tumor resection and subsequent radiation five years ago, have vastly improved since he began using cannabis medicine.

I can't begin to tell you what it means to have an in-depth conversation with my husband again, and what it means to see him enjoy his life, as limited as the doctor's say it may be. For example, he got out of bed this morning and told me that he did so in "gratitude" for the ability to do so.

I'd like to address the "abuse" potential for this medicinal herb. I know of many patients whose stories mirror my husband's and I have never seen anyone abuse their medicine. As you know, by reading the research submitted, the side effects and mortality issues associated with marijuana use pale in comparison to alcohol, tobacco and prescription drug abuse.

Overindulgence in Marijuana induces a state of euphoria and sleepiness. I have seen alcohol cause violent, abusive behaviors and even result in death. There is not one known death caused by marijuana use alone. Prescription medicines have many side effects. The Tylenol with codeine and oxycodone adversely affect my husband's liver function, and cause depression. His anti-seizure meds affect his blood ammonia level and his hormone replacement therapy has over stimulated his red blood cell production, both conditions endangering his life.

I can't stress enough the need for this medicine. I trust that you are weighing all of the scientific evidence along with testimonies from all perspectives before making your decision to reschedule marijuana.

I ask you to reschedule marijuana as a class five pharmaceutical. The AMA has recognized its medicinal value, and its abuse potential is consistent with other medicines in this class.

Please support regulation and adequate distribution of this medicine to the people who need it! Do not classify those who are ill as criminals for using a medicine which helps them in so many ways.

I implore you to do the research necessary to make the appropriate decision for us all.

Thank you.

Gen Bensinger-Johnson