

RCW 69.51A.005 Purpose and intent. (1) The legislature finds that:

(a) There is medical evidence that some patients with terminal or debilitating medical conditions may, under their health care professional's care, benefit from the medical use of cannabis. Some of the conditions for which cannabis appears to be beneficial include, but are not limited to:

(i) Nausea, vomiting, and cachexia associated with cancer, HIV-positive status, AIDS, hepatitis C, anorexia, and their treatments;

(ii) Severe muscle spasms associated with multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, and other seizure and spasticity disorders;

(iii) Acute or chronic glaucoma;

(iv) Crohn's disease; and

(v) Some forms of intractable pain.

(b) Humanitarian compassion necessitates that the decision to use cannabis by patients with terminal or debilitating medical conditions is a personal, individual decision, based upon their health care professional's professional medical judgment and discretion.

(2) Therefore, the legislature intends that, so long as such activities are in strict compliance with this chapter:

(a) Qualifying patients with terminal or debilitating medical conditions who, in the judgment of their health care professionals, may benefit from the medical use of cannabis, shall not be arrested, prosecuted, or subject to other criminal sanctions or civil consequences under state law based solely on their medical use of cannabis, notwithstanding any other provision of law;

(b) Persons who act as designated providers to such patients shall also not be arrested, prosecuted, or subject to other criminal sanctions or civil consequences under state law, notwithstanding any other provision of law, based solely on their assisting with the medical use of cannabis; and

(c) Health care professionals shall also not be arrested, prosecuted, or subject to other criminal sanctions or civil consequences under state law for the proper authorization of medical use of cannabis by qualifying patients for whom, in the health care professional's professional judgment, the medical use of cannabis may prove beneficial.

(3) Nothing in this chapter establishes the medical necessity or medical appropriateness of cannabis for treating terminal or debilitating medical conditions as defined in RCW 69.51A.010.

(4) Nothing in this chapter diminishes the authority of correctional agencies and departments, including local governments or jails, to establish a procedure for determining when the use of cannabis would impact community safety or the effective supervision of those on active supervision for a criminal conviction, nor does it create the right to any accommodation of any medical use of cannabis in any correctional facility or jail. [2022 c 16 s 115; 2015 c 70 s 16; 2011 c 181 s 102; 2010 c 284 s 1; 2007 c 371 s 2; 1999 c 2 s 2 (Initiative Measure No. 692, approved November 3, 1998).]

Intent—Finding—2022 c 16: See note following RCW 69.50.101.

Short title—Findings—Intent—References to Washington state liquor control board—Draft legislation—2015 c 70: See notes following RCW 66.08.012.

Intent—2025 c 58; 2007 c 371: "The legislature intends to clarify the law on medical cannabis so that the lawful use of this substance is not impaired and medical practitioners are able to exercise their best professional judgment in the delivery of medical treatment, qualifying patients may fully participate in the medical use of cannabis, and designated providers may assist patients in the manner provided by this act without fear of state criminal prosecution. This act is also intended to provide clarification to law enforcement and to all participants in the judicial system." [2025 c 58 s 4010; 2007 c 371 s 1.]