



April 12, 2022

The Honorable Marc Berman
Chair, Assembly Business and Professions Committee
1021 O St. Ste. 6130
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 1954 (Quirk): Physicians and surgeons: treatment and medication of patients using cannabis
NOTICE OF SUPPORT**

Dear Chairman Berman:

The California Cannabis Industry Association (CCIA) is pleased to support AB 1954 (Quirk), which prohibits physicians from denying treatment or medication to qualified patients, based solely on a positive drug screen for THC, except when medically indicated. The bill further clarifies that medicinal cannabis use does not constitute the use of an illicit substance for the purpose of treatment evaluation and protects physicians from punitive consequences for administering medicinal cannabis as a treatment option.

Opioid treatments are frequently prescribed for the treatment of moderate-to-severe pain. In 2019, chronic pain affected 27.8% of women and 25.3% of men in the United States. In recent years, the acceptance and use of prescription opioids for the treatment of chronic pain has increased dramatically, despite serious known risks and a lack of evidence for their long-term effectiveness. As many as 25% of patients who receive long-term opioid therapy in a primary care setting struggle with opioid addiction – a public health emergency that has reached epidemic proportions.

In their 2017 report, *The Health Effects of Cannabis and Cannabinoids*, the National Academy of Sciences concluded that there is substantial evidence that cannabis is an effective treatment for chronic pain in adults. A University of California at Berkeley study found that [81% of patients reported](#) that cannabis alone was more effective at relieving their pain than using an opioid.

Despite substantial evidence of the effectiveness of using medicinal cannabis to treat chronic pain, many health plans, health systems, and hospitals still require patients to sign agreements not to use illicit or controlled substances for the duration of their prescribed opioid treatment and agree to drug testing. Many physicians also lack clarity as to whether they can prescribe opioid medications

to patients who test positive for cannabis, resulting in hundreds of chronic pain patients who are unfairly denied access to quality-of-life or life-saving medications.

CCIA has historically supported legislation that prioritizes patient health and opposed policies that bar patients from accessing the critical lifesaving medicine they need. For these reasons, CCIA is pleased to support AB 1954 and respectfully requests your AYE vote when it is presented in the Assembly Business and Professions Committee.

Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact CCIA's legislative advocate, Amy O'Gorman Jenkins, at 707-291-3270 or amy@precisionadvocacy.co.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lindsay Robinson".

LINDSAY ROBINSON
Executive Director

Cc: Members, Assembly Business and Professions Committee
Assembly Member Quirk
Robert Sumner, Chief Consultant, Assembly Business and Professions Committee
Bill Lewis, Assembly Republican Caucus