

Marijuana A Medical Alternative To Opioids For Chronic Pain Treatment

Written by Wisconsin Senate Democrats

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Shilling backs Compassionate Cannabis Care Act as Democrats partner with health professionals and patients in medical marijuana push.

MADISON – On the heels of a bipartisan effort to legalize marijuana oil for the treatment of children with seizures, Democratic legislators are pushing to expand access to comprehensive care through the use of medical marijuana.

The Compassionate Cannabis Care Act authored by Sen. **Jon Erpenbach** (D-Middleton) and Rep. **Chris Taylor** (D-Madison) would legalize physician-supervised access to medical marijuana. The bill has gained widespread support from health professionals, patients and Senate Democratic Leader **Jennifer Shilling** (D-La Crosse).



“Most people view medical marijuana as an issue of providing comprehensive health care to those with serious illnesses,” said Shilling. “Medical research, scientific studies, and personal experiences clearly support the use of medical marijuana. I think it’s time to look at our laws and consider joining the majority of states that have already legalized medical marijuana to help treat patients with unbearable and debilitating pain.”

Medical marijuana is currently legal in 28 states including the border states of Michigan, Minnesota, and Illinois. In addition to expanding health care treatment options, states that have legalized the use of medical marijuana have experienced a nearly 25 percent drop in deaths from opioid overdoses compared to states that did not have those laws.

“Opioids kill 80 Americans every day,” added Shilling. “If we want to get serious about saving

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lives, everything should be on the table - especially since studies indicate that medical marijuana can be a more effective and less addictive treatment for pain. For cancer patients, glaucoma sufferers and other ailing citizens, medical marijuana is one potential tool health professionals can use to treat serious medical conditions and ease their suffering.”

National polling in May 2016 showed that 89 percent of Americans support medical marijuana. Organizational support for physician-supervised access to medical marijuana includes the Wisconsin Nurses Association, the Wisconsin Public Health Association, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Arthritis Research Campaign, the American Bar Association, the American Public Health Association, the American Academy of HIV Medicine and the Lymphoma Foundation of America.

Tony Palese contributed this story.