



DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.



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Town Council Members

Re: Local cannabis ordinance

Dear Members:

As we consider our local response to the legalization of cannabis, I'm writing to share information that may help in the development of local cannabis ordinances and to provide the ordinance adopted by the Marin County Board of Supervisors as a model to consider.

I share your experience of public discourse around cannabis, with strongly held and widely divergent opinions among our residents. Unfortunately, due to Federal prohibitions on cannabis research, these conversations are not guided by strong scientific understanding.

As Public Health Officer and as a physician, I believe health considerations are vital in informing choices around access to medicinal products. In 2017, I offered the County of Marin Supervisors a summary of the emerging evidence of the health impacts of cannabis, both positive and negative, to inform the development of the County ordinance. I shared the results of the 2017 National Academies of Sciences report, *Health Effects of Cannabis and Cannabinoids: Current State of Evidence and Recommendations for Research*. This comprehensive review of existing evidence can be summarized in a few key findings.

The National Academies found evidence for benefit of cannabis in treating some medical conditions, including forms of chronic pain. The researchers also found substantial evidence for cannabis harms, including increased risk for motor vehicle accidents, dependence with regular use, impaired cognition and academic performance among young people, and increased risk of early onset schizophrenia with regular use. The report also called for renewed support for cannabis research, citing a lack of studies that could verify its safety and efficacy.

I know that we share the goal of thriving and healthy communities and that each jurisdiction will navigate these choices differently. I thought it was important to share emerging scientific evidence that raises serious public health concerns, especially for youth. My hope is that you can take this into account as you consider the timing and scope of cannabis policies.

In November 2017, County of Marin Supervisors unanimously approved the Medicinal Cannabis Delivery-Only Retailer (MCDORe) licensing ordinance, limiting commercial activity to delivery-only medicinal cannabis businesses in unincorporated

areas. MCDORe can serve as a model for jurisdictions seeking to enhance access to cannabis, while allowing due time for further research on the health impacts of cannabis.

As always, thank you for your leadership in creating healthy communities. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



Matt

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