

Jeffrey F Powers DVM
Representing Michigan Veterinary Medical Association
Chairman American Veterinary Medical Association Working Group on Cannabis

January 15, 2020

Dear Representatives,

Thank you for this opportunity to discuss the importance of passage of HB 5085 which will give veterinarians in Michigan the authority to consult with their clients regarding the usage of CBD and Marijuana products in the animal owners' pets. The passage of this bill is imperative because at the present time the veterinarian does not have this authority to give guidance to their client on the health benefits and risks of administering Cannabis products of all types to their pets. As we are well aware CBD products of all kinds are readily available in dispensaries, a variety of retail outlets and the internet and it is very difficult for animal owners to understand the differences in products, how to correctly administer safe and effective dosages and what to avoid when it comes to choosing cannabis products for their pets. On a daily basis veterinarians in Michigan are asked questions by animal owners on whether CBD products can be helpful in the management of a variety of animal health conditions and they are unable to legally give their clients the necessary guidance in the use of cannabis products. Many clients also use these products before going to a veterinarian and these products can interact with other medications and the veterinarians are uncomfortable in asking animal owners whether they are already administering cannabis products due to legal concerns.

A recent survey by BDS Analytics on "Pets, Pain and CBD" Found that only 25% of animal owners surveyed can understand and clearly articulate the differences between THC and CBD. In addition, in states such as Colorado and Arizona as legal dispensaries increased the use of pet cannabis products increased by eight-fold in a few years. We are likely to see the same increase in Michigan as more dispensaries open. Research in the use of cannabis in pets is in its early stages and fortunately several veterinary colleges in the US are now leading the way to provide veterinarians cutting edge guidance in the potential use and safety of cannabis products in pets. HB 5085 clears the way for veterinarians to guide animal owners on the proper use of cannabis products while this science knowledgebase develops.

Additionally, marijuana products which have higher levels of THC MAY have beneficial effects at low doses however many pets already have been, and more will be accidentally exposed to overdoses on THC products. These marijuana products will be increasingly available in the medical and recreational dispensary channels as well as home produced. Passing HB 5085 will allow veterinarians the legal basis to consult with animal owners regarding the potential benefits and hazards of administering marijuana products to their pets, as well as how to seek appropriate treatment should overdoses occur.

Thank you again for this opportunity to present to the committee and I urge you to support HB 5085. Are there any questions?

Sincerely,

Jeffrey F Powers DVM