



July 5, 2020

Dear Senator Galgiani,

The members of the Veterinary Cannabis Society (VCS) wish to thank you for your progressive leadership in authoring SB 627. In similar fashion to the legal ability of physicians to recommend cannabis since 1996, SB 627 allows for veterinarians to “recommend” safe and beneficial cannabis therapies to animal patients with varied ailments; such as seizure disorders, anxiety-related conditions, and pain relief associated with osteoarthritis. SB 627 will be a monumental shift for veterinarians and for the patients benefiting from cannabis use.

As a nationwide non-profit organization formed to educate veterinarians, protect pets, and advocate for the veterinary profession, the VCS sees SB 627 as a pioneering piece of legislation that will ultimately act as guide for other states, and possibly the federal government, as they consider the use of medical cannabis for companion animals.

An amendment within the bill, however, is a point of significant concern and must be addressed. The amendment would allow for the sale of cannabis products intended for animal use within Adult Use/Recreational Cannabis dispensaries, thus effectively allowing pet owners to circumvent veterinary consultation and begin self-prescribed treatments of cannabis to their pets without professional medical guidance or supervision. In addition, the language of the amendment would also allow for any person over the age of 21 to purchase products from a Medical Cannabis dispensary and begin treating their pets without the necessary medical recommendations and treatment plans required to ensure safe and effective use of the medicinal product.

The proposed amendment to SB 627 undermines the vital importance of safety. Use of cannabis in animals without appropriate medical guidance will lead to improper dosing by owners and subsequent THC toxicity, necessitating treatment of the pet in the emergency room. Additionally, by choosing to self-prescribe cannabis for their pets, harm may come to animals due to necessary medical care (surgery, antibiotics, or other treatments) not being provided. By avoiding the counsel of a veterinarian, pet owners may unwittingly cause harm to their beloved pets if there are other necessary and more appropriate treatments required.

In all of the concern surrounding medical cannabis use in pets over the last several years, the most crucial aspect has been in protecting animals from harm. The amendment introduced to SB

627 will result in detriment to pets and provide a disservice to their owners by depriving them of much needed medical guidance.

The members of the Veterinary Cannabis Society wish to see accepted use of cannabis therapies in our animal patients when indicated, and we must have safe and responsible use.

We strongly support SB 627 and the language of its original intent. We ask the amendment allowing for the sale of cannabis products for pets in both Medical Cannabis and Recreational Cannabis dispensaries, without a veterinarian recommendation, to be removed.

On behalf of the Veterinary Cannabis Society, thank you for helping safeguard the health and wellbeing of our patients, and your own four-legged family members.

Most sincerely,

Patti Mayfield, DVM, HABC, CVCH

Veterinary Cannabis Society, Advocacy Committee Chair