



March 9, 2021

The Honorable Shane Pendergrass
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 925 – Workgroup on Medical Cannabis Use by Pregnant and Nursing Women – Letter of Information

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Committee Members:

The Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission (the Commission) is submitting this letter of information for House Bill (HB) 925 entitled “Workgroup on Medical Cannabis Use by Pregnant and Nursing Women.” HB 925 establishes a workgroup, to be staffed by the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), whose membership includes a representative from both MDH and the Commission, respectively. The workgroup is tasked with studying various aspects of the potential health impacts of medical cannabis use by pregnant and nursing women and making recommendations regarding guidelines for medical cannabis exposure for this specific group of women.

The items this workgroup is tasked with studying are incredibly complex and would require far more time and resources to have any meaningful impact. Studies such as this are usually undertaken by a national committee of medical experts that disseminates practice guidelines for their professional health care organization. In developing primary research, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) plays a role in supporting scientific research into the medical uses of cannabis in scientifically valid investigations as part of the agency’s drug review and approval process.

Furthermore, HB 925 does not provide funding for the workgroup. The bill requires MDH to provide staff support for the 10-member workgroup, and without additional funding MDH would be required to use existing resources to fulfill this requirement during a historically difficult period for public health. The bill takes effect June 1, 2021, when the State and MDH will likely still be dealing with the current public health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Staffing even a short-term workgroup requires significant staff resources, and therefore, HB 925 presents an unnecessary administrative burden at a time when public health resources are already undergoing unprecedented strain.

I hope you find this information useful. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Taylor Kasky, Director, Policy and Government Affairs, at (443) 915-5297 or at taylors.kasky@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Taylor Kasky". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Taylor Kasky, JD
Director, Policy and Government Affairs
Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission

cc: Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee