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December 2, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
U.S. Capitol Building, H-222  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
House Republican Leader  
U.S. Capitol Building, H-204  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and its physician and medical student members, I am writing to express our significant concerns about H.R. 3884, the “Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment and Expungement (MORE) Act of 2019,” which the House of Representatives plans to consider this week. The MORE Act would decriminalize marijuana and expunge convictions for marijuana-related offenses, among many other provisions. The AMA does not support legalizing cannabis use until further research is completed on the public health, medical, economic, and social consequences of its use. As such, the AMA strongly supports S. 2032, the “Cannabidiol and Marijuana Research Expansion Act,” which would improve the process for conducting scientific and clinical research on cannabidiol (CBD) and marijuana, and streamline the development of safe and effective cannabinoid-based drugs approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

It is the AMA’s position that cannabis is a dangerous drug and as such is a serious public health concern. We oppose legalizing the sale of cannabis for adult use and support stronger public health messaging on the health effects of cannabis and cannabinoid inhalation and ingestion. AMA policy opposes state-based legalization of cannabis for medical use and supports the traditional federal drug approval process for assessing the safety and efficacy of cannabis-based products for medical use. The AMA is especially concerned about the consequences of its use, particularly in high-risk populations such as youth, pregnant women, and women who are breastfeeding. With respect to criminal penalties, the AMA believes that public health-based strategies, rather than incarceration, should be utilized in the handling of individuals possessing cannabis for personal use. In order to promote public health and safety, research on the impact of cannabis legalization and decriminalization also is encouraged and information derived from such activities should be widely disseminated. At its recent November House of Delegates policymaking meeting, the AMA adopted new policy calling for a study on the expungement, destruction, and sealing of criminal records for legal offenses related to cannabis use or possession.

The AMA is very concerned with the growing public support and legislative efforts at all levels of government to legalize marijuana and the medical use of cannabis. This has resulted in many individuals using marijuana-derived products that have not been approved by the FDA. This seems to be the reverse of what a safe and effective medical marijuana framework should be. The AMA believes that scientifically valid and well-controlled clinical trials conducted under federal investigational new drug applications are necessary to assess the safety and effectiveness of all new drugs, including potential cannabis products for medical use. Cannabis and its compounds, in particular CBD, has been found to have some therapeutic benefits. However, legal and regulatory barriers to cannabis and cannabinoid

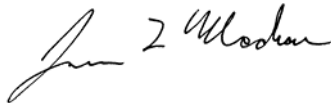
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research have left physicians and patients without the evidence needed to understand the health effects of these products and make sound clinical decisions regarding their use.

Accordingly, the AMA believes the focus of federal efforts first should be on removing such barriers to research. We support adequate and well-controlled studies of marijuana and related cannabinoids in patients who have serious conditions for which preclinical, anecdotal, or controlled evidence suggests possible efficacy and the application of such results to the understanding and treatment of disease. We urge the House of Representatives to facilitate and support such research, as S. 2032 would do, rather than legalizing cannabis now.

Thank you for considering our concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim L. Madara". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James L. Madara, MD

cc: The Honorable Jerrold Nadler  
Chairman  
House Committee on the Judiciary

The Honorable Jim Jordan  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on the Judiciary