

November 1, 2016

NM Medical Advisory Board
Medical Cannabis Program
NM Department of Health
Santa Fe, NM. 87503

Dear Advisory Board Members,

I understand that you are considering the possibility of adding opiate addiction treatment to the list of medical conditions for which the physician-prescribed use of cannabis is approved. I have received a compelling letter on this subject from a highly-experienced nurse practitioner, Anita Briscoe. She provided, in addition to an extensive bibliography outlining the research findings on this topic, a personal testimony to the effectiveness of this plant in treating opiate addiction. I am completely persuaded by Ms. Briscoe's information and would like to recommend it to you as well as urging you to take the step she suggests of expanding the list of approved conditions.

During the legislative interim I chair the Health and Human Services Committee. We held hearings in Taos and Santa Fe this past year and received very many presentations on both the severity of the opioid and heroin addiction problem in our state and on the anecdotal evidence which seems undeniable as to the efficacy of cannabis in reducing the need for more dangerous and expensive treatments used as alternatives.

I am not, as you are, a medical professional. However I have worked in the field of addiction treatment and behavioral health services for a great many of the 42 years that spent as a licensed social worker in this state prior to retirement in 2008. I can see no downside to permitting doctors and prescribing nurse practitioners to add this tool to the full spectrum of treatment approaches they already have. Ms. Briscoe has put it far more eloquently than I can. But I lend my support to her recommendation.

Sincerely,

Gerald Ortiz y Pino