

RESOLUTION REGARDING THE MEDICAL MARIJUANA 2020 BALLOT INITIATIVE

Whereas the Mississippi State Board of Health is charged with formulating policy regarding public health matters; and

Whereas the Mississippi State Board of Health conducted a special Board Meeting in December 2019 for the purposes of understanding issues surrounding medical marijuana, and information was presented by representatives from Medical Marijuana 2020, the Mississippi State Medical Association and the University of Mississippi Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences; and

Whereas medical evidence to date demonstrates that chemical constituents of cannabis (marijuana), cannabidiol and THC, have numerous potential medical uses, with four cannabis-based compounds that have currently undergone FDA review and which are available by prescription (prescription formulations of cannabidiol and THC), used for the treatment of certain seizure disorders and anorexia/nausea respectively, including patients afflicted with AIDS and Cancer; and

Whereas Marijuana is a Schedule I drug and illegal under federal law; and

Whereas numerous states have made non-pharmaceutical marijuana products available for either medical or recreational uses. States permitting medical use only have wide variability in regulatory oversight. Many do not allow smoking of raw product or have other restrictions on mechanisms of consumption; and

Whereas there are numerous known harms from the use of cannabis products including addiction, mental illness, increased accidents, and smoking related harms; and

Whereas, there is not a clearly defined nor FDA approved "Medical Marijuana." No federal insurance or other health insurance provider payments are available for its purchase; and

Whereas, a ballot initiative has been introduced that will allow the public to vote on the legalization of medical marijuana in November of 2020 in Mississippi; and

Whereas, the proposed amendment to the Mississippi State Constitution amendment would allow the use of marijuana for a very broad number of medical indications including such vague reasons as pain management, there would be no ability to restrict the mechanisms of consumption (i.e., edibles, combustible smoking), there would be no ability to control for the concentration of THC, or the proportion of THC to CBD; and any subsequent changes to the components of this amendment would have to occur through ballot measure rather than changes to state statute; and these products are not FDA approved, do not have standard dosing per unit of consumption, and are not supported by rigorous scientific evidence to support the claimed health benefits; and

Whereas, the proposed amendment would assign responsibilities to the Mississippi State Department of Health far beyond the scope and mission of the Agency, including oversight of agricultural production of marijuana, oversight of marijuana product processing and tax collection; and

Whereas, the consumption of any combustible inhaled product is harmful to individual health; and

Whereas, routine marijuana consumption has numerous known harms and is contrary to the mission of public health; and

Whereas the Ballot initiative would require the Mississippi State Department of Health to oversee a medical marijuana program that is beyond the capacity of the Department and would seriously harm the function of the Agency; and

Whereas the Mississippi State Board of Health does not believe it should be able to set tax rates and spend money without legislative authorization or oversight; and

Whereas the proposed ballot measure is a constitutional amendment, and as such is not subject to the oversight and management of the legislature and the Governor's office; and any required changes to the proposed amendment would require additional ballot measures, rendering needed changes essentially impossible to achieve; and

Whereas Cannabis-based products have only four FDA approved prescriptions for existing medical indications and additional uses for cannabis products should be validated through scientific study and approved by regulatory authorities such as the FDA;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT

The Mississippi State Board of Health expresses its strong opposition to the Medical Marijuana 2020 Ballot Initiative; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution be spread upon the minutes of the Mississippi State Board of Health and that copies of this Resolution be distributed to the members of the Mississippi Legislature and to the public.

ADOPTED THIS DAY THE 8TH DAY OF JANUARY 2020.