

The Pharmaceutical Society of New Zealand: Submission on the Misuse of Drugs (Medicinal Cannabis) Amendment Bill

The Pharmaceutical Society of New Zealand Inc. (the Society) is the professional association representing over 3,000 pharmacists, from all sectors of pharmacy practice. We provide to pharmacists professional support and representation, training for continuing professional development, and assistance to enable them to deliver to all New Zealanders the best pharmaceutical practice and professional services in relation to medicines. The Society focuses on the important role pharmacists have in medicines management and in the safe and quality use of medicines.

General Overview

The Pharmaceutical Society of New Zealand **supports** the introduction of a Bill to **provide a regulation-making power** that enables the setting of standards for products manufactured, imported and supplied under licence.

The Pharmaceutical Society of New Zealand **does not** support the exception and statutory defence for terminally ill people to possess and use illicit cannabis and to possess a cannabis utensil.

Specific Comments

Clause 4: Section 2 amended (interpretation):

The Society supports the interpretation of a CBD product under this clause. It is an appropriate step that will progress the Misuse of Drugs Amendment Regulations 2017, which were signed into legislation late last year.

Clause 5: Section 2 amended (Possession and use of controlled drugs)

The Society does not support the use and procurement of an unregulated form of Cannabis plant or plant material by patients, even if the patient is terminally ill.

Pharmacists have an important role in supporting their patients around the appropriate safety of medicinal products. Due to the potential source of the proposed unregulated form of Cannabis, it is not possible to guarantee the product is safe or of a consistent quality for the patient to consume at any stage of their life.

Accessing a **regulated funded product** which has been also determined as appropriate for terminally ill patients may be more beneficial for both the patient and family and will also remove the need for a statutory defence.

Please can the committee also consider defining the process of management for a terminally ill patient if they live longer than the 12 months defined in the proposed Bill?

Clause 7: Section 14 amended (Licences)

The Society supports the amendment of the licencing section and would be more than happy to help and assist in the establishment of a regulatory process that helps define the minimum quality standard for any cannabis based products that will be provided to patients by health professionals.