



TO: Senate Committee on Health

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RE: Testimony for Information Only: Senate Bill 534 (Medical Cannabis)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin (PSW), the state's professional association for pharmacy professionals. PSW would like to express our appreciation to the authors of Senate Bill 534 for recognizing and including pharmacists in Wisconsin's proposed medical cannabis framework.

Pharmacists are medication experts – professionals who dedicate their careers to ensuring that medications are safe, effective, and used appropriately. SB 534 wisely acknowledges that any program involving the therapeutic use of a controlled substance must include pharmacists' clinical expertise and oversight. Every day, pharmacists help patients navigate side effects, avoid dangerous drug interactions, and use medications responsibly. Including pharmacists in the structure of Wisconsin's medical cannabis program ensures that patients receive evidence-based counseling and professional safeguards – not just access to products.

By requiring that licensed medical cannabis dispensaries employ Wisconsin-licensed pharmacists, SB 534 aligns medical cannabis dispensing with the same principles of accountability and safety that guide every other therapeutic substance. This approach protects patients, supports prescribers, and builds public confidence in a carefully regulated system.

Involving pharmacists in dispensing and counseling within medical cannabis facilities provides several essential benefits:

- **Patient Safety:** Pharmacists ensure that medical cannabis products are used safely and in coordination with other prescription and over-the-counter therapies.
- **Clinical Guidance:** Many patients seeking medical cannabis will already be taking multiple medications. Pharmacists are uniquely trained to identify drug interactions, contraindications, and appropriate dosing forms.
- **Education and Adherence:** Pharmacists provide counseling that helps patients understand the expected effects, onset of action, and safe storage – reducing the risk of misuse or misunderstanding.

- **Public Confidence:** Pharmacist involvement demonstrates that Wisconsin's program is grounded in medical professionalism, not commercialization. It positions the program as a healthcare initiative, not a retail venture.

We sincerely thank the authors of SB 534 for recognizing pharmacists' critical contributions and embedding their role in the legislation. This inclusion is a powerful affirmation that patient safety and clinical integrity remain at the center of Wisconsin's approach to medical cannabis.

While pharmacists' clinical oversight is essential, it is also important to clarify the operational boundaries created by federal law and existing regulatory frameworks. I raise these points not to suggest any changes to the bill or to encourage opposition to the legislation, but rather to clarify some misinformation and misconceptions that have been raised about this legislation.

Medical cannabis cannot be dispensed through a pharmacy in Wisconsin under federal law.

Marijuana remains a Schedule I controlled substance under the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). As a result, pharmacies and pharmacists holding DEA registrations cannot dispense cannabis products without jeopardizing their federal licenses.

Wholesale distributors and payor systems that serve pharmacies also operate under federal regulation, preventing them from supplying or reimbursing cannabis products.

Therefore, dispensing will occur within licensed medical cannabis facilities, separate from traditional pharmacies – but under the professional supervision of licensed pharmacists, as the bill provides.

This structure – where pharmacists work within dispensary settings – ensures that patients benefit from pharmacists' medication knowledge while protecting pharmacy licenses, DEA registrations, and the broader integrity of Wisconsin's pharmacy system.

Pharmacists stand ready to partner with policymakers, regulators, and healthcare providers to ensure the program is implemented responsibly and effectively.

By formally incorporating pharmacists into Wisconsin's medical cannabis program, this legislation ensures that patient safety, clinical guidance, and professional oversight remain at the heart of this new therapeutic option.

Pharmacists thank the bill authors and this committee for recognizing our role as trusted medication experts. We look forward to working with you to build a responsible, patient-centered program that reflects Wisconsin's tradition of pharmacy leadership in healthcare safety.

Thank you for your time and for your thoughtful consideration of this legislation.