

Good morning Chairmen and members of the Committee. My name is Betsy Snook and I am the Chief Executive Officer of the Pennsylvania State Nurses Association (PSNA). I am also a registered nurse. Today I am joined by Kevin Busher, PSNA Director of Government Affairs. Kevin will assist me in answering questions you may have.

PSNA is a state-wide professional nursing organization representing the Commonwealth's more than 212,000 Registered Nurses. PSNA is a constituent member of the American Nurses Association. Registered Nurses are the largest health care profession in the Commonwealth and the nation.

We are here today to provide the Committee with information specific to PSNA's involvement in Senate Bill 1182, introduced by Senator Mike Folmer and Daylin Leach. Our testimony explains the role of the Registered Nurse and their role in public policy. Our testimony will not address the clinical testing results related to medical cannabis.

Registered nurses are committed to our patients, the public and to collaborating with other health care professionals to promote efforts to meet health needs. Our Nursing Code of Ethics embodies our commitment to society and to changing social structure that may diminish health and well-being. Therefore, as care providers, we are obligated by our Code of Ethics to bring about social change to support legislation that could provide symptom relief to our seriously ill patients for whom conventional therapies and / or medications have proved ineffective.

PSNA supports legislation that both protects patients from prosecution when seeking the use of medicinal cannabis and also protects health care providers who prescribe and dispense medicinal cannabis in accordance with state law to relieve intractable medical conditions or symptoms. PSNA supports SB 1182 because it meets this criteria. PSNA is working with Senator Folmer's office to introduce amendments and clarifying language that will further protect and clarify the role of

advanced practice registered nurses in prescribing and dispensing medical cannabis as outlined in SB 1182.

PSNA continues to advocate for the inclusion of registered nurses at decision-making tables throughout the Commonwealth. This legislation accomplishes this by including registered nurses as a part of the medical cannabis advisory committee in addition to the secretaries of health, agriculture, drug and alcohol programs, the Medical Association, Dental Association and Pharmaceutical Association. To this end, SB 1182 recognizes the unique role and relationship Registered Nurses have with our patients.

PSNA also advocates that medical cannabis is worthy of further rigorous clinical testing. To truly weigh the risks and benefits of medical cannabis, there must be federal-level open discussions regarding the conversion of marijuana from a Schedule I to Schedule II drug classification. Schedule II classification would allow testing of

consistent grade medical cannabis in a randomized controlled fashion to ascertain the drug's risk/benefit profile for a multitude of illnesses and symptoms. PSNA will continue to support further education of registered nurses and other health care providers regarding appropriate evidence-based therapeutic use of cannabis that have proven to be therapeutically effective.

PSNA would like to thank Senator Folmer and Leach for bringing nurses to the table to discuss this important patient-driven initiative. In addition, we thank the chairmen for allowing us to testify and the committee members for listening to our testimony today.