November 29, 2016

The Honorable Andy Harris
United States House of Representatives
1533 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Harris

The undersigned national organizations are writing to strongly endorse the Medical Marijuana Research Act of 2016 (H.R. 5549) and, recognizing that time is short for action on the bill during the remaining weeks of this session, to urge immediate reintroduction of the bill in 2017.

We applaud your initiative and that of your House co-sponsors to amend the Controlled Substances Act to lessen the regulatory burden and facilitate research on marijuana and its constituent compounds by qualified scientists. By creating an exception for marijuana from the current obstacles of Schedule I registration and review procedures, the bill provides a sensible streamlined approach for the review of applications and granting of registrations to conduct research with marijuana.

In addition, the bill amends the process for the Department of Justice (DoJ) approval of applications from individuals seeking to manufacture or dispense marijuana exclusively for legitimate medical research and requires DoJ to approve an application unless it is demonstrated that the issuance of such registration is not in the public interest.

Further, the bill calls for the Department of Health and Human Services to review existing medical and other research on marijuana and to report to Congress on the results of the review. The National Institutes of Health provided funding of nearly $103 million for marijuana/cannabinoid research in 2015, and it recently convened a Neuroscience Research Summit on Marijuana and Cannabinoids to address the growing need to understand the basic pharmacology and potential therapeutic benefits of cannabinoids as well as their deleterious effects. Information from that Summit will no doubt complement the activities of the recently announced study by the National Academy of Medicine entitled “Health Effects of Marijuana: An Evidence Review and Research Agenda.”

Thank you again for introducing H.R. 5549. Our organizations represent a range of scientific, professional, and patient provider and advocacy groups which may differ on policies related to the legal status of marijuana but are united in their support of scientific research. We are eager to stand with you as this bill receives further consideration and is reconciled with its companion bill in the Senate, the Marijuana Effective Drug Studies Act of 2016 (S. 3077).
Respectfully,

American Association of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine
American Pain Society
American Psychological Association
American Society of Anesthesiologists
College on Problems of Drug Dependence
Federation of Associations in Behavioral & Brain Sciences
Friends of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
Friends of the National Institute on Drug Abuse
Friends Research Institute
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals
National Council for Behavioral Health
National Foundation for Prevention of Chemical Dependency Disease
Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE)
Phoenix House
Research Society on Alcoholism, Executive and Government Affairs & Advocacy Committees
Substance Abuse Librarians and Information Specialists (SALIS)
The Indian Addictions Issues Coalition of Mental Health America of Indiana
Treatment Communities of America

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