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OPINIONS

Improve law enforcement for medical pot

The Michigan Medical Marijuana Act works. Patients are experiencing relief and finding a better quality of life through the benefits of medical marijuana.

Why, then, do Attorney General Bill Schuette and some members of Michigan's House of Representatives and Senate want to over regulate the act, make access to medicine difficult and even provide sensitive patient medical information to Michigan State Police?

The proposed bills in the Michigan House and Senate are aimed at rendering the act essentially useless. While the current act written in the spirit of helping eliminate many of those discrimination and potential police

One bill even goes as far as to give treatment of patients, an municipalities accountable for



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provides protections for patients and is Michigan residents, new regulations will protections and subject patients to profiling.

the state immunity when it comes to egregious addition that refuses to make their actions.

I have personally witnessed the law work. The parents of a 6-year-old girl and medical marijuana patient with brain cancer were finally able to provide comfort to their daughter from pain and suffering when nothing else worked. A 50-something man with skin cancer found relief and improvement in his condition by using a medical marijuana derivative cream.

I have also seen egregious violations of human rights related to the law. A 30-year-old individual and licensed caregiver who called police to report a possible break-in at his home was subsequently arrested and thrown in jail; the plants he was cultivating for licensed patients were taken away and destroyed. There have also been senseless home raids and invasions of law-abiding citizens and the scenario is usually the same: arrest now and ask questions later. In many instances, the cases are ultimately thrown out and yet the damage — to medicine for sick individuals and to reputations — is done.

If the state of Michigan, and its residents who overwhelmingly approved the act, want to take action on medical marijuana, they should think about re-education and training for law enforcement. Too often, patients are arrested and charged with crimes while in compliance with the law because of obsolete training and a lack of education on medical marijuana.

Beyond education and re-training, both sides would benefit greatly from a medical marijuana summit, a forum featuring leaders from each community to address concerns and create a safer environment for patients and law enforcement.

The people of Michigan approved medical marijuana for use in this state. Our representatives in Lansing and law enforcement officials statewide need to listen to the people, and can start by sitting down with patients, caregivers and supporters of the act.



Ricardo Thomas / The Detroit News

Evidence seized from a dispensary and the homes of clinic owners.

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