

2021 MEDICAL STUDENT ADVOCACY CONFERENCE

MEDICAL MARIJUANA RESEARCH

The “Cannabidiol and Marihuana Research Expansion Act (S. 253),” introduced by Senators Feinstein (D-CA), Grassley (R-IA), and Schatz (D-HI), would improve the process for conducting scientific and clinical research on cannabidiol (CBD) and marijuana and streamline the development of safe and effective cannabinoid-based drugs approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Given growing public support and legislative efforts at all levels of government to legalize the medical use of cannabis, many individuals are using marijuana-derived products that have not been approved by the FDA. Many states and the District of Columbia have enacted laws making the medical use of cannabis legal at the state level, even though such use is still illegal at the federal level.

The American Medical Association believes that scientifically valid and well-controlled clinical trials conducted under federal investigational new drug applications are necessary to assess the safety and effectiveness of all new drugs, including potential cannabis products for medical use. Cannabis and its compounds, in particular CBD, have been found to have some therapeutic benefits. However, legal and regulatory barriers to cannabis and cannabinoid research have left physicians and patients without the evidence needed to understand the health effects of these products and make sound clinical decisions regarding their use. Our federal laws today are standing in the way of this needed research.

The AMA strongly supports the “Cannabidiol and Marihuana Research Expansion Act” to enable legitimate research evaluating the potential efficacy and safety of medicines derived from cannabis. This legislation passed the Senate with unanimous support in December 2020. Unfortunately, the bill did not pass in the House of Representatives prior to the end of the 116th Congress.

ASK: Urge your senators to cosponsor S. 253, the “Cannabidiol and Marihuana Research Expansion Act” to enable medical marijuana research, and request that your Representative to introduce a companion bill in the House of Representatives.