



February 6, 2017

The Honorable Michael Young, Chair
Committee on Corrections and Criminal Law
Indiana State Senate
200 W. Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

The Honorable Susan Glick, Ranking Member
Committee on Corrections and Criminal Law
Indiana State Senate
200 W. Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Chairperson Young, Ranking Member Glick and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Epilepsy Foundation and our Indiana chapter the Epilepsy Foundation of Indiana, we urge you to support Senate Bill 15, which would help provide for access to hemp oil as a treatment option for Indiana children living with epilepsy and uncontrolled seizures. Hemp oil contains cannabidiol (CBD), which is legally available in the majority of states for treatment of epilepsy. Senate Bill 15 would allow legal access to hemp oil for children diagnosed with a seizure condition by a physician who have failed to gain seizure control after trying at least three FDA-approved treatment options. The bill would also establish a state-managed registry for physicians who want to study the use of hemp oil in treatment of intractable, or uncontrolled, epilepsy.

The Epilepsy Foundation is the leading national voluntary health organization that speaks on behalf of more than three million Americans with epilepsy and seizures. We foster the wellbeing of children and adults affected by seizures through research programs, educational activities, advocacy, and direct services.

Epilepsy is a medical condition that produces seizures affecting a variety of mental and physical functions. Approximately 1 in 26 Americans will develop epilepsy at some point in their lifetime. There is no "one size fits all" treatment for epilepsy, and about a third of people living with epilepsy suffer from uncontrolled or intractable seizures, with many more living with significant side-effects, despite available treatments. Uncontrolled seizures can lead to disability, injury, and even death. This is why people living with uncontrolled seizures turn to treatment options like hemp or CBD oil, when other options have failed.

The Epilepsy Foundation is committed to supporting physician directed care, and to exploring and advocating for all potential treatment options for epilepsy, including hemp or CBD oil and medical cannabis. People with uncontrolled seizures live with the continual risk of serious injuries and loss of life. If an individual and their healthcare professionals feel that the potential benefits of any treatment option, like hemp oil, outweigh the risks, then families need to have that legal option of accessing such treatment. Nothing should stand in the way of patients gaining access to a potentially lifesaving treatment.

In states where medical use of hemp or CBD oil and/or cannabis is legal as a treatment for epilepsy, a number of people living with epilepsy report beneficial effects, including a decrease in seizure activity. Not everyone with epilepsy should or would consider hemp oil as a treatment option, and further research is needed on the connection between hemp oil and seizures. But hemp oil, when recommended by a treating physician, may be the best alternative for some individuals living with drug resistant epilepsy and uncontrolled seizures.

The Epilepsy Foundation and the Epilepsy Foundation of Indiana urge your support of Senate Bill 15. We also encourage you to support other compassionate, comprehensive CBD and/or cannabis legislation so individuals in Indiana living with epilepsy and uncontrolled seizures can gain safe, legal access to these treatments. State regulated cultivation, production and dispensing of hemp oil, CBD and/or cannabis treatments is the only way to such access. Please do not hesitate to contact Angela Ostrom, Chief Legal Officer & Vice President Public Policy, at 301-918-3766 or aostrom@efa.org or Dianna Miller-Wilson at the Epilepsy Foundation of Indiana at dmiller-wilson@efa.org or 317-544-9097 with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Dianna Miller-Wilson
Executive Director
Epilepsy Foundation of Indiana



Philip M. Gattone, M.Ed.
President & CEO
Epilepsy Foundation