

STATE OF KANSAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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WILLIAM S. CLIFFORD, MD
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Chairman Rob Olson

March 15, 2022

Senate Fed and State Committee

Mr. Mike Welton, Committee Assistant

Opponent Testimony for SB 560 Informational Hearing

I am speaking today representing the Kansas Society of Eye Surgeons and Physicians (KSEPS) and, with permission, the Kansas Optometric Association (KOA).

I am a practicing Ophthalmologist in Garden City, Kansas. My training includes an Eye Surgery Residency and a Specialty Fellowship in Glaucoma treatment and surgery. I have practiced for over 30 years, and know well the effect of drugs on eye pressure. Practicing near the Colorado border, I have witnessed patients going blind while believing that they were self-treating with recreational marijuana.

THC, one of the active ingredients in marijuana, is a very poor treatment for glaucoma. Although studies have shown some pressure lowering effects, the 3-4mm of pressure lowering lasts only a few hours, requiring repeated dosing with excessive amounts of THC. In addition, the chemical triggers tachyphylaxis, meaning that the effect of the chemical is circumvented by the body within a few months. Ironically, some components of marijuana can even raise eye pressure.

In contrast, we have current medications, administered as little as once per day, which lower eye pressure 8-12mm, with few side effects and no tachyphylaxis. These medications are available as affordable generics with little impact on access for all patients.

Both KSEPS and the KOA respectfully request that Glaucoma be struck from SB 560 as a qualifying medical condition as listed in Section 2, (p) (8) or line 42.

William S. Clifford, MD, MBA

Fry Eye Associates

Garden City, KS

KSEPS Board Member