

Petition for Insomnia as qualifying medical condition under Lynn and Erin Compassionate Use Act
Richmond

Index

1. Introductory narrative of individuals requesting inclusion of new medical condition
2. Proposal that includes medical benefits
3. References

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Introductory narrative of individual requesting inclusion of new medical condition

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Stephanie Richmond
2400 Tucker Road NE
Albuquerque, NM 87131
505-385-5636

PA-C Richmond is a member of the New Mexico Medical Advisory Board and has a professional interest as a medical provider in the inclusion of this diagnosis for the Lynn and Erin Compassionate Use Act to assist patients and provide quality healthcare with medical cannabis.

Proposal and medical benefits

Insomnia is defined as difficulty with sleep initiation or maintenance with subsequent impairment in daytime function. Insomnia is a common medical complaint that generates over five million office visits per year in the United States alone (1). Sleep is essential for health and involves factors such as quality and duration, and recent research has shown that later sleep timing and greater variability in sleep are associated with adverse health outcomes such as increased risk of depression and cardiovascular diseases (2). Patients with insomnia are at increased risk for development of dementia (1). Insomnia is a chronic medical condition with many risk factors and comorbidities. Many of these comorbid diagnoses are already approved conditions for medical cannabis in New Mexico. These include anxiety, cancer, PTSD, Parkinson's, fibromyalgia, chronic pain and sleep apnea. In cases where treatment is ineffective or access to Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for insomnia is limited or delayed, then pharmacological therapies can be useful (3). However, adverse effects from conventional pharmacological treatments for insomnia are common and include dependence, abuse potential, tolerance, daytime sedation, psychomotor impairment manifesting as falls and cognitive impairment and increased risk of head injury or fracture (3). Overall, cannabis may have a short-term benefit on improving sleep time, where evidence has shown reductions in sleep onset latency (2). Based on the available evidence, THC and THC derivatives, used either alone or in combination with CBD, have been shown to improve self-reported sleep scores (2). An Australian study reported in the Journal of Sleep Research showed that medicinal cannabis oil improved both time and quality of sleep, in particular light sleep increased by 21 minutes per night compared to placebo ($p=0,041$) as monitored by Fitbit and self-assessment scores over a two week study period (4).

As per the approved petition for medical cannabis for anxiety, medical cannabis has also been proven safe, is less addictive than benzodiazepines and is safer in both accidental and intentional overdose to all current conventional pharmacologic treatments.

Medical cannabis has been reported by patients to members of this advisory board as an effective treatment for insomnia. The use of medical cannabis is in alignment with the Lynn and Erin Compassionate Use Act in that cannabis is beneficial for alleviating symptoms of insomnia.

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References:

- 1) https://www.uptodate.com/contents/risk-factors-comorbidities-and-consequences-of-insomnia-in-adults?search=insomia&source=search_result&selectedTitle=5~150&usage_type=default&display_rank=5
- 2) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9067069/#:~:text=Overall%2C%20cannabis%20may%20have%20a, reductions%20in%20sleep%20onset%20latency.&text=Based%20on%20the%20available%20evidence, improve%20self%2Dreported%20sleep%20scores.>
- 3) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8598183/#s1title>
- 4) <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/jsr.13793>