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June 6, 2018

The Honorable Matt Gaetz
United States House of Representatives
507 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Gaetz:

The American Academy of Neurology (AAN), the world's largest association of neurologists representing more than 34,000 professionals, is strongly committed to improving the care and outcomes of persons with neurologic illness in a cost-effective manner. We would like to express our support for *H.R. 5634, the Medical Cannabis Research Act*.

One in six people live with a brain or nervous system condition, including Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, stroke, epilepsy, traumatic brain injury, ALS, multiple sclerosis, and headache. State legislatures and regulatory agencies have taken the first steps to making medical cannabis products available to patients. Nearly all conditions approved for state medical cannabis prescriptions are neurologic in nature, and patients visit their neurologist with requests for these products. However, neurologists are left with little scientific research to make appropriate prescribing decisions for their patients. Furthermore, many physicians are reluctant to approve their patients for medical cannabis due to the discrepancies between state and federal law. We applaud your legislation, which will make it easier for physicians to participate in legitimate medical research and for patients within the Department of Veterans Affairs to access high quality clinical trials for medical cannabis. Patients and physicians need this research to determine whether medical cannabis is an appropriate treatment option for neurologic disease. Physicians also need clarity on the divergent legal landscape so that they may appropriately prescribe any safe, effective, and approved cannabis-derived therapies supported by medical research.

The AAN applauds your efforts to support research on medical cannabis and its potential impact on patients living with devastating neurologic disease. Many of these sentiments are included in a recent update to our Medical Marijuana Position Statement, which was driven by member concerns on the lack of research available on medical marijuana products and the impact of the ambiguous environment on patients and physicians.

Thank you for taking a leadership role on this critical issue. Please contact Derek Brandt at dbrandt@aan.com if you have questions or request additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Sacco', written in a cursive style.

Ralph L. Sacco, MD, MS, FAHA, FAAN
President, American Academy of Neurology