

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1502

August 4, 1993

Ladd Huffman
210 S. 2nd St.
Box 102
Calumet, IA 51009

Dear Mr. Huffman:

Thank you for contacting my office with your question concerning the use of marijuana for medicinal purposes. I apologize for the delay in my response to you.

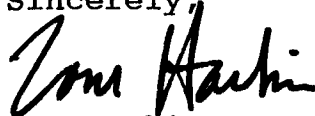
Until 1991, the Department of Health and Human Services sponsored a loosely defined program of allowing a limited number of critically ill patients to use Government-supplied marijuana as a means of controlling nausea and pain associated with the normal course of conventional treatment. By 1991, the government announced it intended to phase out the program because it was inconsistent with the "get tough" policy on drugs, and in 1992 the program was discontinued.

Research has shown that marijuana, particularly its ingredient tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), can be effective in controlling nausea experienced by some cancer patients who are undergoing radiation and chemotherapy. Preliminary studies also suggest that marijuana can be useful in the treatment of the raised intraocular pressure of glaucoma and in the treatment of asthma.

I believe that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) should consider viable treatments with therapeutic effects. However, such medical uses must be strictly controlled to prevent abuse, and complete the drug approval process.

Thank you for contacting me with your question and feel free to contact me in the future.

Sincerely,



Tom Harkin
United States Senator

TH\mg

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