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Dr. Esther Choo, Chair
The Oregon Cannabis Commission
3181 SW Sam Jackson Park Road
Portland, OR 97239

Dear Dr. Choo:

I am submitting our report, "Oregon Medical Marijuana Program Operations and Compliance Assessment" to the Oregon Cannabis Commission. I requested this review to provide the commission and the public a transparent assessment of the Oregon Medical Marijuana Program (OMMP) and improve the way OMMP serves patients and their communities.

Since state voters approved the use of marijuana for medical purposes nearly two decades ago, OMMP has enrolled thousands of patients and regulated the growers and processors who serve them. In this time, OMMP has had both successes and challenges. It has established and administered a program that provides patients dependable access to medical cannabis, while it has worked to keep pace with frequent statutory changes, establish effective tracking systems, and validate and inspect grow site locations.

After voters approved recreational marijuana sales in 2015, the environment for patients, growers and OMMP has changed dramatically. Rapid changes in the wake of legal recreational sales brought an influx of growers and dispensaries into the market and under OMMP regulation, which put new strains on OMMP's administrative and oversight capacity. OMMP struggled to respond to local law enforcement requests to verify grower addresses and navigate statutory restrictions on the information it could share. Statutory restrictions on information-sharing with law enforcement and OMMP's lack of resources and procedures to keep up with grow site address verifications and inspections risk undermining the integrity of the medical marijuana program and create the potential for marijuana product to be diverted from patients and into illegal sales.

OHA is taking action to strengthen OMMP's capability to administer the medical marijuana program on behalf of patients and address the operational barriers and challenges the program has faced. In particular, we are exploring ways to improve OMMP's partnerships with law enforcement to verify grower information without compromising patient confidentiality.

Today, OMMP serves 40,031 medical marijuana patients across Oregon. It is our hope this evaluation will inform and guide the Cannabis Commissions' discussions and recommendations to the legislature so patients can continue to count on an effective, transparent and accountable OMMP program to meet their medical needs.

Sincerely,

Patrick M. Allen
Director