



Wayne State University
School of Medicine

Department of
Internal Medicine

Mailing Address:
Gordon H. Scott Hall
of Basic Medical Sciences
540 East Canfield Avenue
Detroit, Michigan 48201

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Honorable George Crockett
House of Representatives
8401 Woodward Avenue
Detroit, Michigan 48202

Dear Congressman Crockett:

In a recent issue of the Detroit Free Press I was very pleased to read about your thoughts on drug law enforcement.

As you know I have been practicing medicine for the last 38 years in the Detroit Medical Center. During the last seven years in my capacity as Physician-in-Chief of Medicine I had the opportunity to participate in attending rounds at Detroit Receiving Hospital and witnessed first hand the growing drug problem faced by our young people. I agree with you that our drug problems cannot be solved by rigid enforcement of the current existing laws. All too frequently I see young people, literally still children, being recruited for drug trafficking because of the exorbitant profit that can be realized selling illegal drugs. Prior to becoming drug dealers, these young people are virtually being forced to use drugs to become dependent on these illegal profits to sustain their habits. Legalizing the use of recreational drugs and using the same mechanisms currently used to handle alcohol to control these drugs would eliminate the sale, packaging, and standardizing the criminal aspect of drug dealing by eliminating illegal profit motives.

As a physician I see major gains from this approach. While the legislation of controlled drug sale would not eliminate all deaths and disabilities caused by drug toxicity, the major causes of drug-induced morbidity and mortality associated with infections would be minimized or even eliminated. Sterile drug supplies dispensed through government controlled agencies together with instructions for safe drug administration would virtually eliminate the crippling drug abscesses, bone infections, and so frequently lethal infections in the heart and brain.

Within the Detroit Medical Center a majority of newly diagnosed AIDS patients are intravenous drug abusers. There is no question in my mind that the incidence of this disease would also be markedly affected by the government assuring that controlled sterile drugs would be made available for these people. Drug addiction, like alcoholism, should be considered an illness. These people can be helped by supportive care rather than punitive, expensive, and ineffectual enforcement of current drug control laws.

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I have expressed my thoughts to several of my politically active friends. In general, I was told "none of our politicians will have the guts to agree with you." I am, therefore, delighted about your position on our drug law enforcement methods. I would like to offer to you any assistance I could provide in helping you obtain the support of your colleagues in the US Senate and Congress.

Respectfully,



Vainutis K. Vaitkevicius, M.D.
Professor of Medicine

VKV/bmg

cc: Honorable Judge Avern Cohn
Honorable Judge William Cahalan
Honorable Senator Carl Levin
Honorable Congressman Sander Levin
Ms. Patti Knox