

I am writing this submission to request that parliament consider ways they can make medicinal marijuana affordable for everyone, even those on Centrelink or Disability Pensions.

I live with my housemate who lives with chronic pain every single day. He has had a cervical fusion of c4-5 but is now experiencing degeneration above and below the fusion. The muscles go into constant spasm and despite trying everything he could he has ended up being prescribed opioids which he was on for over 10 years, and now since the government have put the limitations on prescribing this medication the public pain clinic at Sir Charles Gardiner Hospital have now put him on methadone, which does not cover his pain at all. He asked them to help him explore the options of medicinal marijuana but the response was as they were a government hospital they could not endorse this "alternative" method of pain relief, and would only consider methadone for his ongoing treatment.

Now with opioids on the PBS the medication for my housemate we're hugely subsidised. He could afford them on his pension, and didn't have to consider going without some food or other things.

But with opioid use for men especially long term there can be side effects such as a drop in testosterone levels. This has been a huge issue for my housemate and as he is only on a pension he cannot afford to see someone privately so he is still waiting after 2 years to be seen by the endocrinologist through the public system.

My housemate has looked into medical marijuana as he is wanting to get off the opioids completely, but another barrier for him is finding a GP that will sign up to be a prescriber, and as we have researched the cost for him to receive medical marijuana will be in excess of \$480 per month which is definitely not affordable for someone on a government pension. He has tried to sign up for trials but there needed to be a GP in the area who would prescribe and nobody around Belmont is willing to do it.

I ask that you consider my submission as this is just one person's story and there are so many people out there needing an alternative to opioids which yes are cheap on the pbs but cause so many problems long term with addiction and systemic dysfunction within the body when used long term.