

STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
MEDICAL QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMISSION

In Re the Petition of:

ROBBIE O. ROBINSON,
Petitioner.

DOCKET NO. 00-09-A-1075MD

FINAL ORDER ON PETITION TO
INCLUDE MANIC OR CHRONIC
DEPRESSION AS DEBILITATING
CONDITIONS UNDER RCW 69.51A

THIS MATTER came before the Medical Quality Assurance Commission on October 4, 2000, at the Doubletree Hotel Seattle Airport, SeaTac, Washington, on the Petitioner's petition for the inclusion of manic or chronic depression as terminal or debilitating medical conditions under RCW 69.51A. The Commission, having considered the petition and the record in this matter, now issues the following:

Section 1: FINDINGS OF FACT

1.1 On June 9, 2000, the Petitioner, Robbie O. Robinson, filed a petition with the Medical Quality Assurance Commission ("Commission") requesting that, pursuant to RCW 69.51A.070, the Commission include manic or chronic depression as a "debilitating medical condition" under RCW 69.51A.010(4)(d).

1.2 On October 4, 2000, at the Doubletree Suites, Seattle, Washington, a public hearing was held before a panel of the Commission. The Petitioner submitted supporting documentation into the record and spoke to the panel. Testimony was taken from a number of interested parties. The Commission was also in receipt of additional written comments.

1.3 On November 17, 2000, during its open business meeting, the Medical Quality Assurance Commission considered the public hearing panel's input, and the record of the public

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hearing held on October 4, 2000, including additional written comments, and made the determinations herein.

1.4 There appear to be no significant clinical studies concerning the use of marijuana in the treatment of patients diagnosed with manic depression (also known as bipolar disease) or chronic depression. The anecdotal evidence suggesting that marijuana use may be beneficial for the treatment of either manic or chronic depression is weak, and this evidence is counterbalanced by medical opinion to the contrary.

1.5 Marijuana has significant cognitive and emotional effects, and thus poses certain known medical and mental health risks. Marijuana itself is a depressive, and marijuana use may interfere with or impair the effects of the growing number of conventional medications that have proven successful in treatment of the various forms of depression. When weighed against these risks, the overall benefits appear to be speculative, and outweighed by the risks.

1.6 The Commission concludes there is not sufficient clinical evidence to support the inclusion of manic depression (bipolar disease) or chronic depression on the statutory list of terminal or debilitating medical conditions for which medical marijuana use may be beneficial in RCW 69.51A.010(4).

Section 2: CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

2.1 The Commission has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to RCW 69.51A.070.

2.2 In interpreting the information presented to it, the Commission utilized its expertise in evaluating the evidence presented and in weighing the potential risks and benefits of using marijuana to treat manic depression (bipolar disease) and chronic depression.

2.3 The Commission has determined that manic depression (bipolar disorder) and chronic depression do not constitute "terminal or debilitating medical condition[s]" within the meaning of RCW 69.51A.010(4).

Section 3: ORDER

3.1 Manic depression (bipolar disease) and chronic depression do not constitute "terminal or debilitating medical condition[s]" within the meaning of RCW 69.51A.010(4).

Section 4: NOTICE TO PARTIES

As provided in RCW 34.05.461(3), RCW 34.05.470, and WAC 246-11-580 either party may file a petition for reconsideration. The petition must be filed with the Adjudicative Clerk Office, 1107 Eastside Street, PO Box 47879, Olympia WA 98504-7879, within ten (10) days of service of this Order. The petition must state the specific grounds upon which reconsideration is requested and the relief requested. The petition for reconsideration shall not stay the effectiveness of this Order. The petition for reconsideration is deemed to have been denied twenty (20) days after the petition is filed if the Commission has not acted on the petition or served written notice of the date by which action will be taken on the petition.

"Filing" means actual receipt of the document by the Adjudicative Clerk Office, RCW 34.05.010(6) and WAC 246-11-080. This Order was "served" upon you on the day it was deposited in the United States mail. RCW 34.05.010(18).

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Proceedings for judicial review may be instituted by filing a petition in the Superior Court in accord with the procedures specified in chapter 34.05 RCW, Part V, Judicial Review and Civil Enforcement. The petition for judicial review must be filed within thirty (30) days after service of this Order, as provided by RCW 34.05.542.

DATED this 22nd day of NOV, 2000.

STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
MEDICAL QUALITY
ASSURANCE COMMISSION

Laura Roderick MD
LAURA RODERICK, M.D., VICE CHAIR



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
PO Box 47879 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7879

November 22, 2000

ROBBIE O. ROBINSON
2515 WESTERN AVENUE
SEATTLE WA 98121

Dear Ms. Robinson:

Enclosed please find the Final Order on Petition to Include Manic or Chronic Depression as Debilitating Conditions Under RCW 68.51A dated November 22, 2000

Questions regarding the order should be directed to Maryella Jansen, Program Manager for the Washington State Medical Quality Assurance Commission, P. O. Box 47866, Olympia, WA 98504-7866 or (360) 236-4792.

Sincerely,

Pam L. Mena
Adjudicative Clerk Office
P. O. Box 47879
Olympia, WA 98504-7879
(360) 236-4674

Enclosure

cc: Maryella Jansen, Program Manager

