

My name is Katie Zinno,

I am 26 years old and recently relocated to Ohio from Washington to see a specialist for one of my diseases. It has been extremely difficult going from a state with a medical program to one without it.

I was born with a genetic condition called Ehlers Danlos syndrome, it affects the collagen in my body (which is present in over 80% of the body). Basically the glue that holds my body together is defective. Think of a rubber band that you continue to stretch...eventually it breaks. Symptoms include chronic and frequent dislocations, GI issues, visual problems, blood vessels that tear easily, fatigue, insomnia, nausea, vomiting, hearing issues. I also have another condition called Intracranial hypertension, my body produces too much spinal fluid (for unknown reasons) and this causes issues like dizziness, vertigo, severe headaches, dementia type episodes, memory loss, hearing and vision loss, fatigue, balance and walking issues. There is no cure for either condition its simply learning to manage the symptoms. I have had 5 brain surgeries for the second condition to implant a VP shunt into my brain to help drain off the excess fluid. There are only a couple meds that can help and brain surgery as an option. The medications have serious side effects and I was unable to tolerate them. I later learned that cannabis naturally lowers the spinal fluid (when taken regularly and in massive doses orally). I have travelled the country to see experts to get a handle on my condition and improve my quality of life. A few years ago I was told there was not much more the doctors could do and they recommended I move back to the northwest to get on the medical cannabis program. I grew up in a Christian conservative household and had never tried cannabis before or had any idea of its full benefits before entering the program. My doctors expressed that they thought I would get control of my nausea, possibly sleep better and get better pain control. At the time I was eligible for hospice care, I had a full time caregiver, and haven't been able to work in 7 years. I initially tried CBD only medication to find that it did not provide enough benefit for me and actually caused headaches. I later learned that I require the entire plant (specifically certain strains) to help manage all my symptoms. When I finally found a therapeutic dose that works I was able to live life much more normally. Less than a year after my 5th brain surgery I was able to get cleared to go back to work after proving and getting cleared by many doctors. no more seizures, I could eat and sleep normally again. In sept 2015 I started working after being off work for 7 years and successfully got myself off social services programs. I worked until I had to move out here and since being in pennsylvania I have had 2 ER visits and a hospital stay (in less than 2 months) due to the inability to manage my symptoms. Cannabis gives my body freedom and functionality. I never expected to be able to work, no one did. Included are some pictures and an article published in Washington. I apologize for the scattered train of thoughts, today is not a good day pain wise.

I never expected to get this far in life, I was on 22 different medications at one point, daily seizures, frequent hospital stays with no end in sight. Now that I have tasted what it is like to live life normally I don't want to lose that. I only want the option to work, finish school, fall in love have a career. I cannot do those things with pharmaceuticals. I am asking for your help in saying yes to allowing medical cannabis in this state. My disease

requires me to travel to see specialists and it becomes difficult that I can't have my prescription here. With cannabis last year I was able to work, pay taxes and live life. Off of it I am back on social services, back on more medication and costing tax payers money.

I have to have another brain surgery coming up and I am concerned if this bill doesn't pass how long recovery will take. This is my life and I deserve a chance to live it. My disease knows no bounds, my medication should be the same.

Please feel free to reach out, I would love to talk to anyone I can to share more of my journey. I have medical documentation as well

<http://www.columbian.com/news/2015/mar/15/patients-seek-cure-for-medical-pot-dilemma/>

(edit from the article, I was not on those 3 different pain medications, those were my options and I opted to use none of them due to the side effects) I react very poorly to many medications which is what makes it so difficult to manage my symptoms

Cannabis saved my life and continues to allow me to function without suffering. Many of you question how that's possible. I've spent the last 2 years researching, immersing myself into the medical cannabis world. Talking to anyone and everyone. The current research will blow your mind! Since starting cannabis therapy I've gone from over 100 appointments a year to less than 20. My flares last hours instead of months.... My overall pain levels have dropped. In fact pain meds don't work anymore.

My last surgery I actually left the hospital to medicate because to get me out of pain from pharmaceuticals kept causing me to stop breathing and slow my heart rate too much.

I've heard from many that say they have tried it and it didn't help. The truth is just like with pills, there are many different plants. Each with its own genetic make up. Are humans not the same? We are snowflakes, made out of water but everyone is different. Instead of trying to fit people into a box, let's start tailoring our healthcare for ourselves.

Cannabis allows you to take control of your health.

Each compound (they are finding more constantly, over 200 to date) affects different nerves in the body. We all have cannabinoid receptors, but when the body is no longer in homeostasis that's how diseases start. Cannabis works by activating these receptors, which then allows the body to communicate. Cannabis actually helps rebuild at a cellular level. Changing the body's DNA and rRNA, not necessarily removing the disease as a whole but brings you back to homeostasis (remember we are snowflakes, what's normal for one may not be for another)

I still have EDS, IH... My joints still pop out, bruise all of it... But what I'm trying to say is I'm no longer suffering.

Now before you jump into it, please research, ask questions. Medical patients require a much higher quality plant and process.

Ensuring the highest standards from seed to the patient. Tincture (cannabis suspended in various liquids including alcohol \* though I don't recommend this for patients\*), edibles using coconut oil, butter or BHO (butane extracted oil), whole plant extract (also known as Rick Simpson Oil or RSO by many \*again the method of extraction makes a huge difference in patient benefits\*), topicals (applying cannabis externally to provide pain relief without the head high), vaporizing (safer than smoking flower, more discrete and little to no scent). And of course smoking cannabis. (which is probably the least

beneficial way to consume, roughly getting less than 20% of the medicinal value vs other methods of medicating)

Many have heard that CBD is the high free way to health. What we are not thinking about is that we need the whole plant not individual compounds. I tried CBD only for awhile and yes I had many benefits but I was still suffering. When I started consuming all forms that's when my health started changing rapidly.

I am requesting consideration for large quantity consumers that require strain matching to help their condition, collective gardens for those that need more than the minimum plant count as well as special consideration to help offset the large cost to the grower to help supply the medication for low income patients

<https://youtu.be/155kd5PyEuk>