

LEXINGTON  
**HERALD-LEADER**

## **Support medical cannabis for veterans**

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On this Veterans Day, with an estimated 750,000 cases of post-traumatic stress disorder among veterans, I strongly urge the Veterans Administration and the Kentucky General Assembly to seriously consider giving them access to cannabis. The American Legion has two resolutions favoring medical cannabis.

A worrisome component of the disorder is the constant, ever hovering specter of addiction and suicide. The suicide rate, sometimes reported to be as much as 22 a day, may seem a high estimate but one a day is too much.

The Journal of the American Medical Association recently reported of a 25 percent drop in opioid overdose deaths in states with medical-marijuana laws. A Cato Institute report from January 2015 cited a 5 percent drop in suicides in states having medical-marijuana laws. We would expect to see a similar drop in veteran addiction, overdose deaths and suicides should Congress or the legislature pass a medical cannabis law.

Veterans report great success when using medical cannabis for PTSD, chronic pain and a number of other conditions. The VA and the legislature should support passage of a strong comprehensive medical cannabis bill as soon as possible. The welfare — indeed, the lives — of our veterans are depending on it.