

Medical marijuana access compared to alcohol

Contributed by Dale Gieringer, Ph.D

Opponents of medical marijuana often claim there are too many dispensaries in their area. This specious argument has been used to impose unacceptably low limits in Oakland and elsewhere. The cap in Oakland is completely arbitrary, yet other communities use it as a basis for their own permits. In fact, it is far too restrictive and completely unfair. These localities have dozens of pharmacies.

By way of comparison, it may be helpful to look at the number of licensed alcohol outlets in the same region. The chart below shows several localities, their number of liquor stores, total alcohol outlets, including wine and beer shops as well as licensed restaurants, bars and clubs compared to the number of medical cannabis dispensaries. The numbers speak for themselves.

We need many more dispensaries for the Bay area, not fewer.

City

Liquor Stores Alc Licenses
Medical Marijuana

Oakland

195
802
4

Alameda Co (unincorp.) 42
159

3

San Francisco

715 3,464
43

Hayward

56
37
2

Berkeley

36
323
3