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UPMEYER SAYS LEGISLATORS WORKING ON MEDICAL MARIJUANA ISSUE

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CLEAR LAKE — The Speaker of the Iowa House says Iowa and Minnesota lawmakers are continuing to explore a system that would allow Iowa residents to buy medical marijuana oil from their northern neighbor. Talks stalled last year on the legislation, and now the Iowa

law that decriminalized possession of cannabis oil for the treatment of conditions like chronic epilepsy is set to expire this summer. Republican Linda Upmeyer of Clear Lake says the bill was held up last year because people wanted to grow medical marijuana in Iowa, something Upmeyer says may not be feasible at least in the short-term. She says the conversations were about accessing it while the state sets up production. "North Dakota is interested in working with them as well. Neither of us have large enough populations for this to be a real attractive place. Maybe a non-profit will come in and do it, and people just do that and not anticipate making any money it, that's fine. But if we are putting out a RFP for growers, you have to attract somebody either because they just want to do it or because they can make some money at it." Upmeyer is confident some sort of bill will get through the legislature this year dealing with medical marijuana. She says her hope is to be able to access either Minnesota or someone else's medical marijuana immediately as soon as they can set up their registries together instead of having to wait two years to develop all the growing. Upmeyer says the legislature will explore expanding the list of debilitating illnesses that might be able to get a prescription for cannabis oil. She says, "I think we will expand the list. I don't know, because we've been pretty insistent on having some evidence to expand the list, so we are working on it. If we can get people to agree, I would argue we could have done this last year, and moved down this path." Upmeyer says one obstacle to the plan would be the Trump Administration disagreeing with the idea of allowing medical marijuana sales across state lines. She says they are already anticipating doing this bill with the possibility of breaking two federal laws. "I'm fine if the feds just get out of the way and let us do this. That's not been communicated in an official way because the AG's office previously had letters that we could operate under. I think we'll have letters from this administration, but nonetheless, we're going to move forward, anticipating that will be the perspective." Upmeyer made her comments during a legislative forum held in Clear Lake on Friday.

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