

# Pennsylvania's Medical Marijuana Program

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**Vision:** To have a high quality, efficient and compliant medical marijuana program for PA residents with serious medical conditions.

## Key Aspects:

- The patient
- Administration of the law
- A highly monitored supply chain

# Medical Marijuana Program Mission

- To provide access to medical marijuana for patients with a serious medical condition.
- To ensure a safe and effective method of distribution.
- To promote high quality research into the efficacy of medical marijuana.

# The Formal Act



## **Passage/Enactment**

- Signed into law by Governor Wolf on April 17, 2016
- Authorized the PADOH to create the Office of Medical Marijuana

# The Formal Act



## Program Administration

The PADOH will:

- Administer the program
- Issue medical marijuana cards
- Issue permits to grow, process, and distribute

# The Formal Act



## Patients

### Qualifications:

- Resident of the Commonwealth
- Have a serious medical condition
- Certified by a physician

# 17 Original Medical Conditions Covered

## Medical conditions initially selected under Act 16.

- Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis
- Autism
- Cancer
- Crohn's disease
- Damage to the nervous tissue of the of the spinal cord with objective neurological indication of intractable spasticity
- Epilepsy
- Glaucoma
- HIV/AIDS (+)
- Huntington's disease
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Intractable seizures
- Multiple sclerosis (MS)
- Neuropathies
- Parkinson's disease
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Severe chronic or intractable pain of neuropathic origin or severe chronic or intractable pain in which conventional therapeutic intervention and opiate therapy is contraindicated or ineffective
- Sickle cell anemia

# New Conditions Covered

**These serious medical conditions were added and became effective on May 17, 2018.**

- Dyskinesia and spastic movement disorders
- Neurodegenerative diseases
- Opioid use disorder for which conventional therapeutic interventions are contraindicated or ineffective, or for which adjunctive therapy is indicated in combination with primary therapeutic interventions
- Terminal illness



# What Does Medical Marijuana Do?

- Act as an antiemetic for cancer patients
- Reduce chronic pain
- Provides palliative and/or therapeutic treatment
- Decrease spasticity related to MS

# ▶ Clinical Use- Multiple Sclerosis

The American Academy of Neurology has created guidelines for and provided support for the use of medical marijuana to treat MS symptoms.

# Medical Marijuana and the Opioid Epidemic

- “Relief from chronic pain is by far the most common condition cited by patients for the medical use of cannabis.”
- Cannabis can be used to treat chronic pain rather than opioids, or along side opioids.

SOURCE: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2017. *The Health Effects of Cannabis and Cannabinoids: The Current State of Evidence and Recommendations for Research*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/24625>

# Medical Marijuana and the Opioid Epidemic

## States that allow medical marijuana dispensaries have:

- An almost 25% lower rate of death from opioid overdoses per year, than states that don't allow medical marijuana.
- A slight decrease in the number of people checking into treatment programs for opioid addiction.

# Medical Marijuana and the Opioid Epidemic

**Medically supervised marijuana use is associated with decreases in:**

- Opioid prescribing
- Self-reports of opioid misuse

# Physician Involvement

Medical marijuana can be counted as one of many tools in a physician's toolbox to treat serious medical conditions, **including opioid use disorder.**



# Available Forms

- Grower/processors may only manufacture the forms listed within Act 16:
  - Vaporization or Nebulization
  - Pill or Capsule
  - Topical Forms
  - Tincture
  - Oil
  - Liquid Suspension
  - Dry Leaf (Added August 2018)
- A dispensary may only purchase these forms from approved grower/processor

# From Seed to Use

1. Seed/Immature Plant
2. Mature Plant
3. Harvest (Lab Testing)
4. Processing of Medical Marijuana
5. Processed Form of Medical Marijuana (Lab Testing)
6. Dispensary
  - Dispensary can return or recall to the lab testing
7. Patient/Caregiver
  - Patients/Caregivers can return or recall to the dispensary



# Key Participants

- Grower/Processor
- Laboratory
- Practitioner
- Dispensary
- Patient
- Caregiver

# Grower/Processor Overview

- Establish and maintain proper facilities to grow marijuana plants.
- Operate proper facilities to transform the cannabinoids into safe products.

# Laboratory Overview

- Ensure medical marijuana adheres to its labeling so patients receive the correct dosage and form.
- Approved laboratories collect samples to test for contaminants and potency after harvest and after the final processing.

# Practitioner Overview

## **A physician may register as a practitioner if they:**

- Hold a valid, unexpired, unrevoked, unsuspended PA license to practice medicine.
- Demonstrate that he or she is qualified in treating serious medical conditions.
- Apply to the Department to be registered.
- Complete the four-hour training course.

# Dispensary Overview

- Dispense medical marijuana to registered patients and caregivers.
- Maintain clean, efficient, secure, and safe facilities to ensure that the product is not diverted from patients/caregivers.

## Dispensary Overview cont.

**Every dispensary must employ a medical professional who is registered and has completed the required 4-hour training.**

- A medical professional shall be present during all hours that the facility is open to provide consultative advice to a patient.
- A practitioner or physician may not issue a patient certification at the dispensary facility.

# Patients and Caregivers Overview

- Once a patient is issued an ID card, they can obtain medical marijuana.
- Minors and homebound patients may designate a caregiver to obtain their medical marijuana.
  - ▣ Caregivers must be:
    - ▣ At least 21
    - ▣ Registered with the Department
    - ▣ Able to pass a background check
- A caregiver can have up to 5 patients
- A patient can have up to 2 caregivers

# How Patients Register

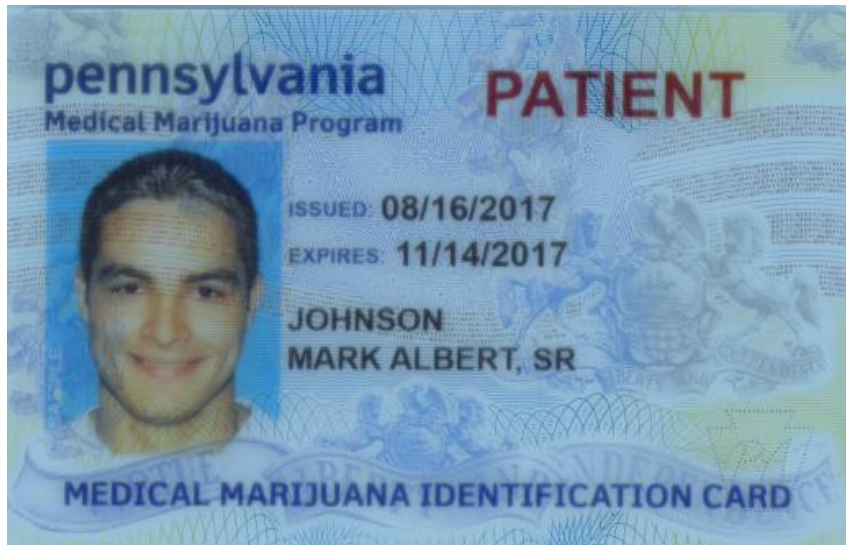
## **Steps to become eligible for an ID card:**

1. Register with the Department
2. Consult with a registered practitioner to assess if medical marijuana is appropriate
3. Be issued a patient certification and finish ID card registration



# ▶ Medical Marijuana ID Card (Patient)

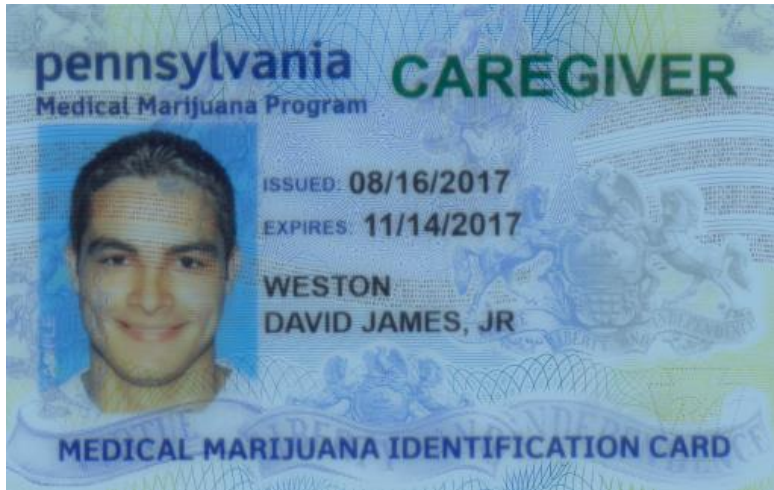
**Patients who are over the age of 18 and who are not homebound will be issued an ID card that they can use at a dispensary.**



- Patients **must be certified** by a registered and approved practitioner to be eligible
- ID card is valid for up to **one year**
- Practitioner issues a **new patient certification** at each renewal

# ▶ Medical Marijuana ID Card (Caregiver)

**Caregivers may serve patients under the age of 18 and patients who are unable to obtain medical marijuana product without assistance.**



- Patients under 18 will **not be issued an ID Card**
- **Minors** will have a **designated caregiver** approved by the Department
- Patients who are **homebound** will have a **designated caregiver** to obtain their medical marijuana

# ▶ Pennsylvania's Medical Marijuana Program

Medical Marijuana is now  
available to Patients in  
Pennsylvania!

# Update

- Completed temporary regulations for: Growers/Processors, Dispensaries, Physicians, Patients, Laboratories, and Clinical Registrants & ACRCs; all which have been published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin.
- Issued Phase I permits to 12 Grower/Processors and 27 Dispensaries.
- Issued Phase II permits to 13 Grower/Processors.
- 12 Grower/Processors and 35 Dispensaries have been approved as operational.

# Update

- Launched registries for patients and caregivers, as well as physicians.
  - Over **77,000 Patients** and more than 8,700 Caregivers have registered, almost 50,000 Patients are certified by a Practitioner with greater than **150,000 Patient dispensing activities** to date.
  - More than **1,200 Physicians** have registered and 830 Physicians have completed the required training to become Approved Practitioners in the Medical Marijuana program.

# Next Steps

- Continue to encourage Physicians to register.
- Continue to educate Patients and Caregivers.
- Continue to issue Medical Marijuana ID cards.
- Operationalize all permitted facilities.
- Carry out Phase II for G/Ps and Dispensaries.
- Implement the Chapter 20 Research program.

# ▶ Pennsylvania's Medical Marijuana Program

Visit our website for updates on implementation.

[www.medicalmarijuana.pa.gov](http://www.medicalmarijuana.pa.gov)

To contact the staff at the Pennsylvania Office of Medical Marijuana, send an email to [RA-DHMedMarijuana@pa.gov](mailto:RA-DHMedMarijuana@pa.gov)



# Questions?

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