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Advisory Board to Review Petitions to Add Conditions to Medical Marijuana Program

(Santa Fe) – The New Mexico Department of Health’s Medical Advisory Board will hold a public hearing at 10 a.m. March 30 in the Harold Runnels Building Auditorium in Santa Fe to review two petitions to add health conditions to the Medical Cannabis Program. The Department of Health received petitions for auto immune diseases, and severe behavioral disturbances related to autism, traumatic brain injury, mental retardation or dementia.

Eight physicians who serve on the Medical Advisory Board will review and recommend to the Department whether those conditions should be added to the Medical Cannabis Program. The Advisory Board will also consider whether to recommend changing the requirements for severe chronic pain eligibility. Currently patients must have proof of their pain such as, X-rays or MRIs, and referrals from a primary care physician and a specialist in pain management or in the disease process that is causing the patient’s pain.

The Advisory Board makes recommendations to the Health Secretary, who decides whether conditions should be added. If a condition is approved, anyone with that medical condition can apply for the Medical Cannabis Program. So far, the Secretary has added nine conditions to the program.

There are 16 current qualifying conditions for medical cannabis: painful peripheral neuropathy, intractable nausea/vomiting, severe anorexia/cachexia, hepatitis C infection currently receiving antiviral treatment, Crohn’s disease, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, Inflammatory Autoimmune-mediated Arthritis, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (Lou Gehrig’s disease), cancer, glaucoma, multiple sclerosis, damage to the nervous tissue of the spinal cord with intractable spasticity, epilepsy, HIV/AIDS, and hospice patients.

To apply for the Medical Cannabis program or to petition for a new condition, look up <http://www.nmhealth.org/marijuana.html> or call the Medical Cannabis Program Coordinator at 505-827-2321.

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