

Medical Cannabis Advisory Board Meeting Minutes*

March 22, 2022

I. Introductory Remarks and Call to Order (8:55)

Stephanie Richmond PA-C called to order the regular meeting of the Medical Cannabis Advisory Board (MCAB) at 9:12 a.m. on March 22, 2022, using a WebEx Events Platform. General Instructions were given to panelists and attendees.

II. Roll Call (10:10)

Stephanie Richmond conducted a roll call. The following persons were present:

Ariele Bauers	<u>present</u>
Mordechai Bronner	(absent)
Jean-Paul Dedam	<u>present</u>
Rachel Goodman	<u>present</u>
Courtney Marquez	(absent)
Allen Plymale	<u>present</u>
Davin Quinn	(absent)
Stephanie Richmond	<u>present</u>
Traci White	<u>present</u>

(Six of nine Medical Cannabis Advisory Board Members were present at this time, so quorum was met, and the meeting started.)

III. Approval of minutes (17:35)

Stephanie Richmond made a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. This motion was seconded by Ariele Bauers.

IV. Medical Cannabis Program (MCP) Update (18:15)

Patient Services Information:

Dr. Dominick Zurlo summarized updates regulations which were promulgated February 22, 2022. “Adequate Supply” was increased to 15 ounces or 425 units per qualified patient and reciprocal patient (over a 90-day period of time). Additionally, the unit increase letter requirement was eliminated and all patients now have access to the same adequate supply amount. This has decreased both a time and cost burden on patients that previously sought to obtain a unit increase letter. Many patients have voiced appreciation for this change. Additionally, the background check for caregivers was removed to ensure individuals who may have had a violation under previous cannabis law were not disenfranchised from acting as a caregiver on behalf of a qualified patient.

Dr. Zurlo then provided a slide presentation with regards to the Medical Cannabis Program. He reviewed the goals of the Department of Health and the purpose of the Lynn and Erin Compassionate Use Act. A map of NM counties showed the vast number of medical cannabis patients from every single county in New Mexico. Patient enrollments continues to increase, and the top three qualifying conditions are PTSD, severe chronic pain, and cancer. Optional demographic data responses continue to be tracked by the MCP. This data identifies specific groups that may need additional resources or support. Also, a slide showing the ages of medical cannabis patients helps to dispel the perception that all medical cannabis patients are younger individuals simply experimenting with cannabis.

Patient Portal:

Dr. French discussed the new Online Patient Portal which had been created to help with the ease of enrollment into the MCP. After a brief introduction, Dr. French summarized many of the beneficial trends the MCP has seen since introducing the portal.

V. Petition 2022 – 001 Include Anxiety Disorder as a qualifying medical condition under LECUA (48:35)

Stephanie Richmond presented the rules to be followed while the petition is presented to the MCAB. Additionally, it was noted that this petition was being submitted by two

of the board members who would therefore recuse themselves when it came time to vote.

Jean-Paul Dedam introduced the petition by addressing his work at the New Mexico Cancer Center and how the symptom of anxiety is often a contributing concern for many of his patients. Patients who use medical cannabis often report that it is the symptom of anxiety that is treated most efficaciously by cannabis use. He added that all of the anxiety diagnoses (generalized anxiety disorder, social anxiety disorder, medication induced anxiety disorder, phobias, etc.) were included under this petition for completeness. Despite the lack of large studies looking at the treatment of anxiety disorder with medical cannabis, there are significant patient surveys you see high rates of efficacy for treatment of anxiety with cannabis. An additional benefit is that of improved sleep. More studies would be useful, but many of the current qualifying diagnoses actual have less information available. In addition to addressing the safety of cannabis, Dr. Dedam added that since many patients self-medicate with cannabis to treat their anxiety, that including anxiety as a qualifying condition could help “pull patients” back to the medical provider and improve provider input in the discussion of cannabis use.

Stephanie Richmond added that anxiety disorder is already a qualifying condition in five other states. Additionally, she added, that by treating anxiety with medical cannabis, it could also act as a harm reduction tool by reducing the need for additional benzodiazepine intake.

Rachel Goodman remarked that she would be supportive of this petition as the diagnosis of anxiety disorder has already been discussed and recommended by the MCAB in previous years.

Concerns regarding the potential exacerbation of anxiety symptoms following high potency THC use were addressed in the following way.

Rachel Goodman shared her understanding that medical cannabis users would likely self-regulate cannabis use to avoid exacerbating anxiety symptoms and likely avoid high potency THC for this reason.

This sentiment was echoed by Ariel Bauers who added that “bud tenders” would also guide patients towards strains that would be most helpful for anxiety symptoms.

Jean-Paul Dedam added that in order to help patients avoid potentially problematic high potency strains of THC, that by including anxiety disorder as a qualifying condition, it would enable medical providers to help guide patients to more appropriate higher ratio CBD strains that would work better in the setting of anxiety disorder.

Ariele Bauers added that by adding anxiety disorder as a qualifying condition, this act might serve to encourage cannabis producers and dispensaries to produce and offer products that are of greater variety and not solely elevated THC.

Rachel Goodman made a motion to approve the petition to recommend that Anxiety Disorder be included in the list of qualifying conditions. This motion was seconded by Stephanie Richmond.

The four members remaining members of the MCAB who were not part of the petition presentation were asked to vote “yes” to approve the petition or “no” to disapprove:

Ariele Bauers	Yes
Rachel Goodman	Yes
Allen Plymale	Yes
Traci White	Yes

In a unanimous vote, the Medical Cannabis Advisory Board recommended that Anxiety Disorder be added to the list of qualifying conditions for the use of Medical Cannabis under the Lynn and Erin Compassionate Use Act.

VI. Public Comments (1:06:17)

Jason Barker – Mr. Barker shared his concerns that the MCAB did not have more input when CCD was addressing “adequate supply”. Mr. Barker also voiced his concerns over his perception that patient’s purchasing cannabis “recreationally” had greater buying power than medical cannabis patients. Additionally, Mr. Barker felt that it was problematic that Anxiety Disorder had been rejected as a qualifying condition because it had been bundled with other diagnoses. Finally, Mr. Barker voiced his frustration that the PPL for patients had been discontinued.

Jennifer Zigler – Ms. Zigler, a medical cannabis patient, shared her frustration that medical cannabis products were “all bought up” by recreational users. She proposed that a patient specific pharmacy be created to address the issue of cannabis shortages for patients.

Attendees were again invited to send in public comments in writing the Medical Cannabis Program’s general email address.

VII. Set date for next Medical Cannabis Advisory Board Meeting (1:14:22)

Stephanie Richmond canvassed the Board members and made a motion to hold the next MCAB Meeting on December 6, 2022, from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 pm. This motion was seconded by Jean-Paul Dedam.

VIII. Adjournment (1:15:45)

Stephanie Richmond PA-C adjourned the meeting at 10:18 a.m.

Minutes submitted by: Gary J. French, MD/ Medical Director NMDOH MCP

***(Please note that an audiovisual recording of the meeting in its entirety is available for viewing and can be found on the Medical Cannabis Program Webpage. These minutes are a short summary of the meeting's events and serve to highlight key features of the meeting.)**