



# Medical Marijuana Program: Overview and Highlights of Recent Program Changes

RIDOH Center for Professional Licensing

April 25, 2017 – Rhode Island State House



# Medical Marijuana in Rhode Island



- 2006 - Passage of the General Laws in Chapter 21-28.6 entitled “The Edward O. Hawkins and Thomas C. Slater Medical Marijuana Act”
- 2009 - Amended to allow Compassion Centers (with 99 plant limit)
- 2014 – Amended to allow Cooperative Cultivations and lift Compassion Center 99 plant limit
- 2016 – Passage of Budget Article 14, creating a new regulatory framework for the entire program including new licensed and grow tags

# Medical Marijuana Program at RIDOH



- The Department of Health Medical Marijuana Program implements the provisions of the Medical Marijuana Act and regulations for registered patients, caregivers, and authorized purchases.
- The Program accepts, reviews, and approves patient, caregiver, and authorized purchaser applications and renewals.

# What the Program Allows



- Patients – Can grow with a registration from RIDOH. Can have up to 12 mature plants/12 immature, 2.5 oz of dried usable\*
- Caregiver – Can grow with a registration from RIDOH - For 1 patient can have 12 mature plants/12 immature, 2.5 oz of dried usable\* / For 2 to 5 patients- 24 mature plants/24 immature, 5 oz of dried usable\*
- Authorized Purchaser – Cannot grow marijuana. Can purchase from compassion centers on behalf of patients

# What the Program Allows



- Cooperative Cultivations – Grow under a license issued by DBR- Groups of patients or caregivers growing together
  - Residential Cooperative Cultivation - 24 mature plants/24 immature, 10 oz of dried usable\*
  - Non-residential Cooperative Cultivation- 48 mature plants/48 immature, 10 oz of dried usable\*
- Licensed Cultivators – Grow under a license issued by DBR. Can only supply Compassion Centers. Possession is limited by the class of their license and by market demand.

# What the Program Allows



- Compassion Centers – Licensed by DBR. Possession is limited to what they can grow internally in their cultivation facility and to what they obtain from cultivators. Sell to patients, caregivers, and authorized purchasers.

# Current Numbers (as of 4/25/17)



- 17,387 registered patients (36 minor patients)
- 2,709 registered caregivers
- 119 authorized purchasers
- 3 compassion centers with 223 staff
- 7 licensed cultivators
- 16 approved cultivator applicants
- 37 cultivator applications being evaluated and processed.

# Licensing Changes for Patients



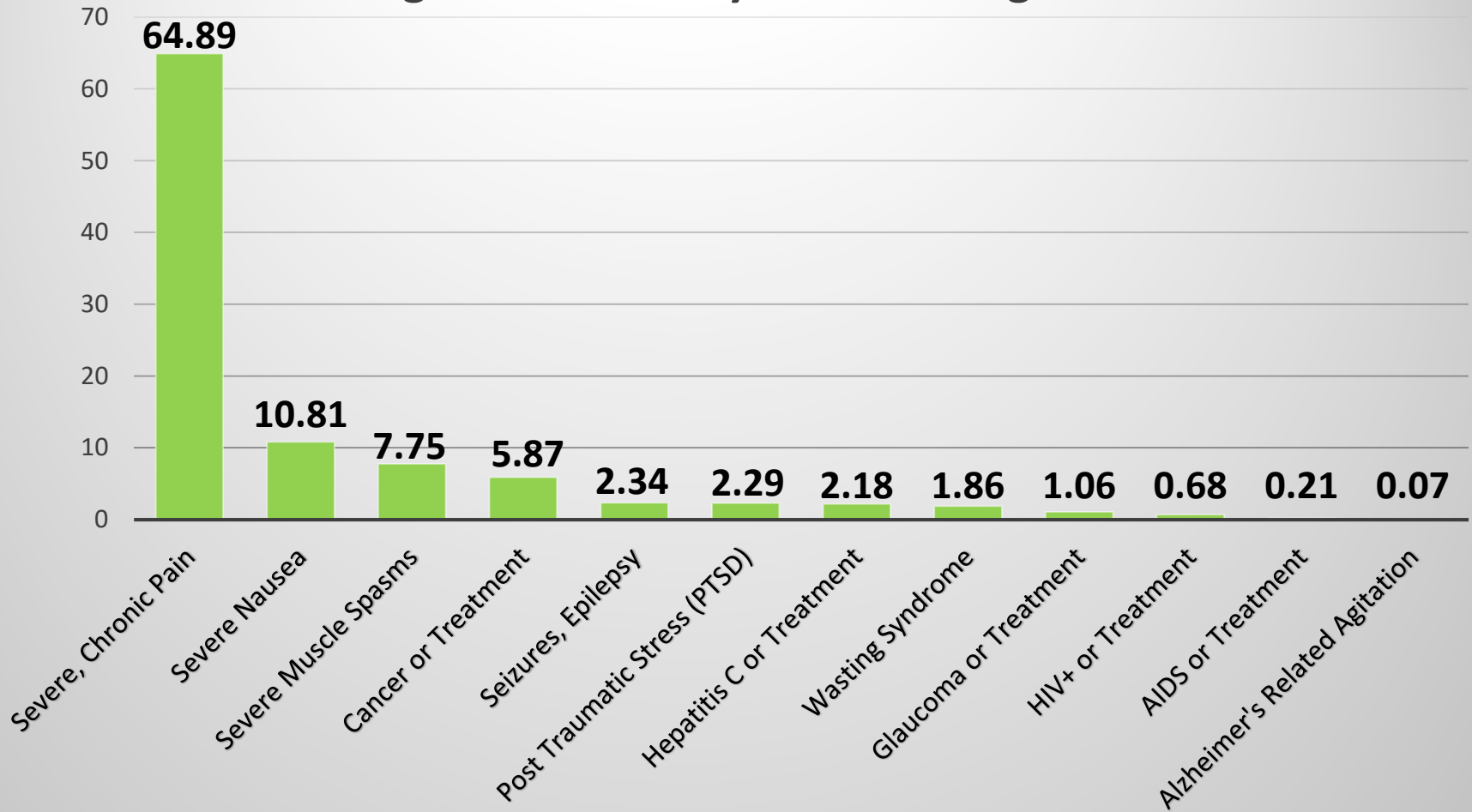
- Number of caregivers allowed per patient reduced from two to one. Patients may now have one authorized purchaser in addition to one caregiver.
- Accessibility to Compassion Centers increased from one per patient to three
- License renewal term changed from two years to one year. Fees reduced by 50% (from \$100 to \$50).
- Priority processing for hospice or chemo-eligible applicants



# Medical Diagnosis



## Percentage of Patients by Medical Diagnosis



Note: Some patients have multiple diagnoses.

# Licensing Changes for Caregivers



- Rhode Island residency now required
- License renewal term changed from two years to one year
- Fees reduced by 50% (from \$200 to \$100)
- May only grow at one location and must register that grow location with RIDOH

# New License Type: Authorized Purchaser (AP)



- Authorized to purchase marijuana at any Compassion Center for no more than one patient cardholder
- Not authorized to grow marijuana
- Logical transition from caregiver to purchaser for those who care for one patient family member, friend, or neighbor

# Caregiver vs. Authorized Purchaser



- Caregivers may have up to five patients
- Authorized purchasers may have only one patient
- Caregivers who have one patient, do not home-grow, and only purchase at Compassion Centers may convert their license from caregiver to authorized purchaser
- Lower fees for authorized purchaser - \$100 vs. \$50
- RIDOH will waive any additional fee for caregivers who convert (through the end of FY 2017)

# Practitioners



- Must be licensed to practice medicine in RI, or licensed in MA or CT with authority to prescribe drugs and current DEA registration
- Must establish a bona fide doctor-patient relationship after completing a full assessment of patient's medical history (semi-annual follow-ups and report to PCP)
- Must complete three hours of CME every two years
- Must establish that patient was educated regarding daily "dosage" and possibly drug interaction (including alcohol)

# Compassion Centers and Staff



- The first two compassion centers were issued RIDOH registrations to operate on April 4, 2013 and May 9, 2013. The third was not ready to operate until October 17, 2014.
- Staff (including Board members, volunteers and principal officers) must be registered by RIDOH before starting employment.
- Currently 223 staff are registered for three centers.
- Compassion Center licensing has shifted to DBR.

# Current Operation of the RIDOH Program



- There are 4 MMP-dedicated staff members (FTEs) and 4 senior staff who attribute a percentage of their time to the MMP.
- Processing times have been reduced in the past year from over 35 days to under 7 days (for applications received with all necessary documentation).
- Cards for every license type with photos are processed at RIDOH's office.
- All information obtained in licensing process is kept strictly confidential, in accordance with HIPAA provisions and our MMP regulations (RIDOH staff only).



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