



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

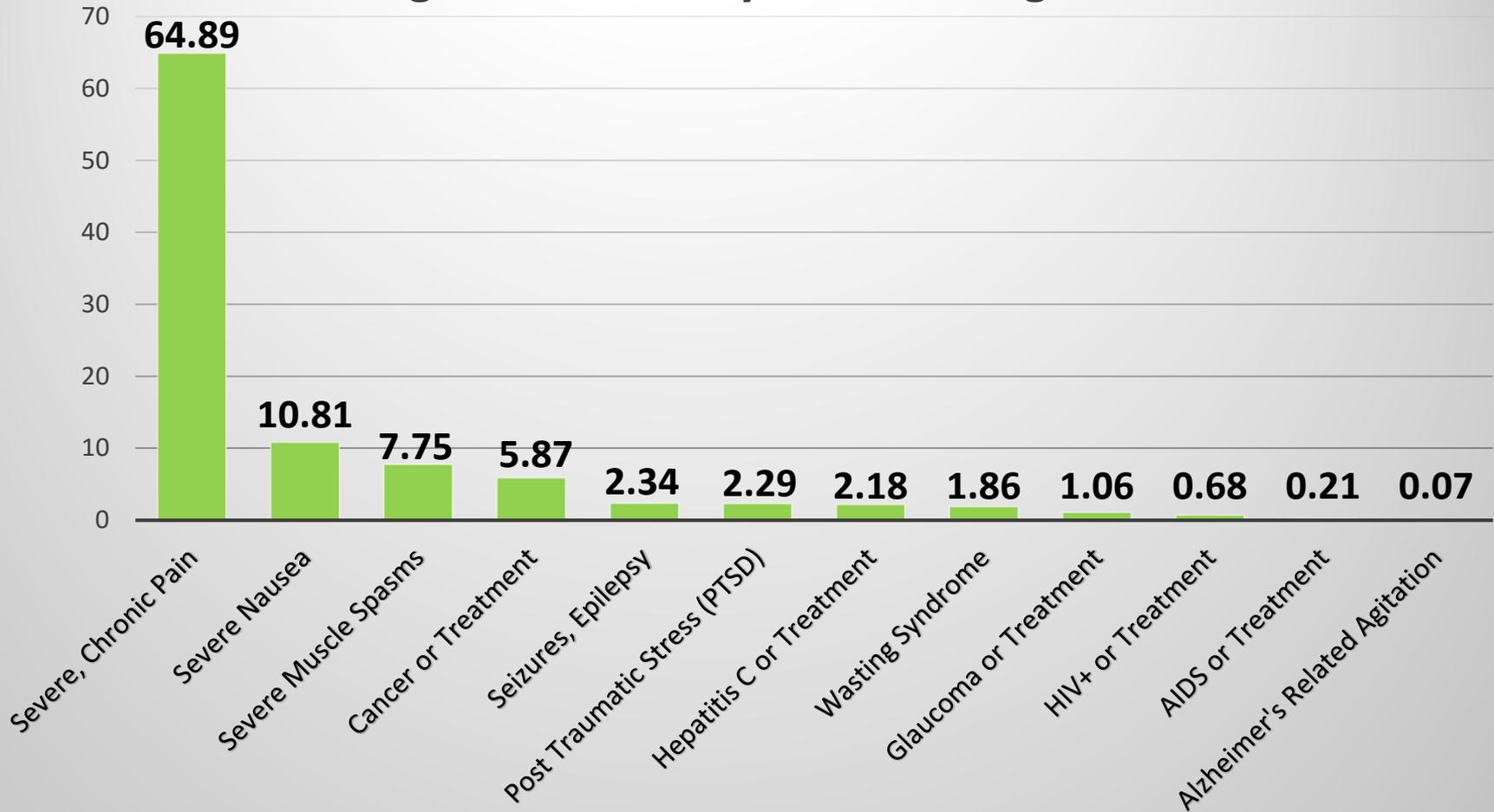


- Number of caregivers allowed per patient reduced from two to one. Patients may now have one authorized purchaser in addition to one caregiver.
- Accessibility to Compassion Centers increased from one per patient to three
- License renewal term changed from two years to one year. Fees reduced by 50% (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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