

Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection  
Medical Marijuana Program  
Board of Physicians—Public Hearing  
Minutes  
January 11, 2017

**Members Present:** Jonathan Harris Commissioner  
Michelle Seagull Deputy Commissioner  
Dr. Vincent Carlesi  
Dr. Godfrey Pearlson  
Dr. William Zempsky  
Dr. Linda Barry  
Dr. Mitchell Prywes  
Dr. Andrew Salner

**DCP Staff Present:** Xaviel Soto Health Program Supervisor  
Karen Semmelrock Board Administrator

**Call to Order**

Commissioner Harris called the meeting to order of the Board of Physicians for Connecticut's Medical Marijuana Program at 8:47 A.M. at the Department of Consumer Protection, 450 Columbus Blvd, Hartford, North conference room A.

**Review and Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes**

On a motion made by Commissioner Harris and unanimously voted, the draft minutes of the November 9, 2016 meeting are accepted.

**Board of Physicians Introductions**

Commissioner Harris introduced the physicians on the Board who each gave a brief talk about their involvement in the program.

Commissioner Harris emphasized that this was the first purely medical program in the country and it remains so. It is a government regulated program that is a private sector model. The dispensary facilities and producers in the community are privately run.

**Status Report on Program Implementation**

Commissioner Harris reported that the program is growing. He stated that he is very pleased with the anecdotal reports from patients on how it is helping and that there is a lot of positive response to the fact that there is an alternative choice for patients with debilitating conditions. There continues to be a lot of discussion and interaction between the patient, the physician and the pharmacist. It is not just an instantaneous moment where there is access to the cannabis.

When the program first started, there were about 1400 patients. As of this morning, that number was 15,136. The number of physicians has grown from about 80 to 593. This increase indicates a greater acceptance of the program within the medical community.

The number of dispensary facility has grown from 6 to soon to be 9. This growth shows that this pharmaceutical model, which had never been done anywhere, that this is a successful program.

### **Discussion and Vote on Petitions to Add Debilitating Medical Conditions**

At this meeting, the Board deliberated on the seven petitions individually, applying the required criteria from the regulations to each. For each condition, the three questions posed in the regulations were reviewed by the physicians individually. The three questions posed in the regulations are as follows:

1. Is the medical condition, medical treatment or disease debilitating?
2. Is marijuana more likely than not to have the potential to be beneficial to treat or alleviate the debilitation associated with the medical condition, medical treatment or disease?
3. Are there other matters that seem relevant to the approval or the denial of the petition?

Commissioner Harris invited the general public to speak on any of the conditions. Only one person had signed up to speak. Joseph M. Semela, Jr., who spoke about his concerns of the system, particularly overuses side-effects and abuse.

- **Atopic Dermatitis, Eczema**

- No testimony from patients or public. Discussion from the Board members only.
- Vote on qualifying criteria #1:
  - 4 yes and 2 no
- Vote on qualifying criteria #2:
  - 0 yes and 6 no.
- Vote on qualifying criteria #3:
  - No discussion

Vote to recommend to the Commissioner to add Atopic Dermatitis, Eczema to the list of debilitating medical conditions:

- The petition to add Atopic Dermatitis, Eczema was denied.

- **Fibromyalgia**

- Commissioner Harris read a letter from Lynn Traskey in support for Fibromyalgia being added to the list of debilitating conditions.
- No testimony from patients or public. Discussion from the Board members only.
- Vote on qualifying criteria #1:
  - 6 yes, 0 no

- Vote on qualifying criteria #2:
  - 6 yes, 0 no
- Vote on qualifying criteria #3:
  - This condition will be recommended for adults.

Vote to recommend to the Commissioner to add Fibromyalgia to the list of debilitating medical conditions:

- A unanimous vote to recommend Fibromyalgia.
- Condition narrowed to read Spasticity or Neuropathic Pain Associated with Fibromyalgia.

- **Muscular Dystrophy**

- No testimony from patients or public. Discussion from the Board members only.
- Vote on qualifying criteria #1:
  - 6 yes, 0 no
- Vote on qualifying criteria #2:
  - 6 yes, 0 no
- Vote on qualifying criteria #3:
  - The condition will be recommended for adults as well as children.

Vote to recommend to the Commissioner to add Muscular Dystrophy to the list of debilitating medical conditions:

- A unanimous vote to recommend Muscular Dystrophy.

- **Osteoarthritis**

- No testimony from patients or public. Discussion from the Board members only.
- Vote on qualifying criteria #1:
  - 4 yes, 2 no
- Vote on qualifying criteria #2:
  - 1 yes, 5 no
- Vote on qualifying criteria #3:
  - No discussion

Vote to recommend to the Commissioner to add Osteoarthritis to the list of debilitating medical conditions:

- The petition to add osteoarthritis was denied.

- **Post-Herpetic Neuralgia, Peripheral Neuropathy and Allodynia from Shingles**

- Regina Walsh came from New Canaan came to speak on behalf of her father, George Walsh, Lieutenant Commander, USN, retired from Darien. She read a letter from him and discussed how his life has changed since his diagnosis 3 years ago. She has done extensive research online and has stated that she is very hopeful that this can help him and others.
- Discussion from the Board members only.

- Vote on qualifying criteria #1:
  - 5 yes, 0 no
- Vote on qualifying criteria #2:
  - 5 yes, 0 no
- Vote on qualifying criteria #3:
  - It was recommended for adults, denied for minors.

Vote to recommend to the Commissioner to add Post-Herpatic Neuralgia, Peripheral Neuropathy and Allodynia from Shingles to the list of debilitating medical conditions:

- A unanimous vote to recommend Post-Herpatic Neuralgia, Peripheral Neuropathy and Allodynia from Shingles.
- Condition broadened to read Peripheral Neuropathy and Allodynia From Shingles.

- **Rheumatoid Arthritis**

- No testimony from patients or public. Discussion from the Board members only.
- Vote on qualifying criteria #1:
  - 5 yes, 0 no
- Vote on qualifying criteria #2:
  - 5 yes, 0 no
- Vote on qualifying criteria #3:
  - It was recommended that Sever Rheumatoid Arthritis be added for adults, denied for children.

Vote to recommend to the Commissioner to add Rheumatoid Arthritis to the list of debilitating medical conditions:

- A unanimous vote to recommend Rheumatoid Arthritis.
- Condition narrowed to read Severe Rheumatoid Arthritis.

- **Severe COPD/Emphysema**

- No testimony from patients or public. Discussion from the Board members only.
- Vote on qualifying criteria #1:
  - 5 yes, 0 no
- Vote on qualifying criteria #2:
  - 0 yes, 5 no
- Vote on qualifying criteria #3:
  - This condition will be denied for adults and children.

Vote to recommend to the Commissioner to add Severe COPD/Emphysema, to the list of debilitating medical conditions:

- The petition to add Severe COPD/Emphysema was denied.

Towards the end of the public hearing, Angela D'Amico, owner and founder of Compassionate Care Center of Connecticut, asked to speak. She wanted to speak on behalf of one of the patients who were being treated for severe damage to the spinal cord.

### **Adjournment**

Commissioner Harris adjourned the meeting at approximately 10:55 am.

### **Next Meeting**

Commissioner Harris stated that another meeting will be scheduled soon as other petitions have been submitted.