

Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection

Medical Marijuana Program

Board of Physicians

Minutes

August 19, 2015

Members Present: Jonathan Harris Commissioner
Dr. Jonathan Kost
Dr. Vincent Carlesi (conference call)
Dr. Deepak Cyril D'Souza (conference call)
Dr. Godfrey Pearlson (conference call)

DCP Staff Present: Michelle Seagull Deputy Commissioner
Elisa Nahas Director, Legal Division
Claudette Carveth Director, Communication Office
Antonio Santoro Staff Attorney
Xaviel Soto Health Program Supervisor
Marguerite Poisson License and Applications Analyst

Call to Order

Commissioner Harris called the meeting to order of the Board of Physicians for Connecticut's Medical Marijuana Program at 8:08 A.M. at the Department of Consumer Protection, 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, room 126.

Update of Process for Adding Debilitating Medical Conditions

Testimony was heard on August 5, 2015 in support or opposition of adding Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS) to the list of approved debilitating medical conditions. Currently, there are six medical conditions in the process of being added to the existing eleven conditions. Commissioner Harris explained the process to add new medical conditions to the Medical Marijuana Regulations.

Discussion and Vote on Petitions to Add Debilitating Medical Conditions

Due to the number of Board Members participating in the meeting via conference call, Commissioner Harris explained a process for each Board Member to discuss their thoughts and how the vote would be taken.

August 5, 2015, the Board heard testimony for a petition to add a debilitating medical condition. At this meeting (August 19, 2015) the Board deliberated on the petition, applying the required criteria from the regulations. When considering the 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?
- Discussion/vote on Complex Regional Pain Syndrome:
 1. Is the medical condition, medical treatment or disease debilitating?
 - Vote on qualifying criteria #1:
 - Unanimous yes
 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?
 - Discussion:
 - The Board Members discussed some of the potential benefits, as well as potential risks of medical marijuana use for patients with Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS). It was stated that CRPS is a neuropathic disease state and medical marijuana has been shown to be beneficial for neuropathic pain. Medical marijuana could be a beneficial adjunctive treatment, and it could also address other symptoms associated with CRPS including anxiety, depression, and sleep disturbances. Traditional medications are beneficial in early phases of treatment, but have high side effects when used on a long-term basis. Medical marijuana shouldn't be considered a first line of treatment, rather an adjunct treatment. Some studies show the effects of medical marijuana on neuropathic pain are less than medications such as Pregabalin. It was advised that physicians need to be careful about the message being sent to patients because the degree of efficacy may be minimal. Another concern is that there can be potential psychiatric side effects when using medical marijuana.
 - Vote on qualifying criteria #2:
 - Unanimous yes
 3. Are there other matters that seem relevant to the approval or the denial of the petition?
 - Vote on qualifying criteria #3:
 - Unanimous no
 - Discussion:
 - Commissioner Harris questioned how this medical condition was diagnosed. The Board Members explained to the Commissioner that this condition is diagnosed through a combination of physical examination and a review of their medical history (specifically a physical injury). The Commissioner also questioned if this could have an effect on the disease progression. A Board Member identified how the use of medical marijuana may have an added benefit in reducing the very high suicide rate for patients with this condition. Another

Board Member questioned the evidence supporting how the use of medical marijuana could change the disease process. Other Board Members clarified that at this point the intended use of medical marijuana is for symptom management.

Vote to recommend to the Commissioner to add Complex Regional Pain Syndrome to the list of debilitating medical conditions:

- Unanimous yes
- 4:0 = recommend

Review and Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

On a motion made by Commissioner Harris and unanimously voted, the draft minutes of the August 5, 2015 meeting are accepted.

Other Discussion

Board members were reminded to send any communications through the Medical Marijuana Program Manager or the Board of Physicians' Board Administrator.

The Commissioner requested a brief recess from 8:54 AM to 8:55 AM. Upon his return, Commissioner Harris stated after receiving the Board Members' recommendations, he decided to accept their recommendation and approve adding Complex Regional Pain Syndrome to the list of debilitating medical conditions.

Adjournment

Commissioner Harris adjourned the meeting at 8:57 AM.

Next Meeting

No meeting scheduled at this time.