



News Release

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Media Contact:

David Torres, Communications Director, david.torres@maryland.gov or (410) 487-8050

Announcement: Commission Chair Brian Lopez to Step Down at the end of the year

Linthicum, MD – (December 16, 2021)—Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission Chair Brian Lopez, who has dedicated more than four years of public service, in a volunteer capacity, to overseeing the implementation and expansion of the Maryland medical cannabis industry, will step down from his seat on December 31, 2021, he announced at the Commission’s public meeting on December 16.

Chair Lopez was appointed by the Governor to serve a four-year term in July 2017. He was reappointed as the Commission’s Chair in 2019, following statutory changes to the body adopted by the Maryland General Assembly.

“I am proud of the accomplishments of the Commission during my time as Chairman,” said Chair Lopez. “Thanks to staff, my fellow commissioners and our industry partners, Maryland has become the gold standard for medical cannabis programs across the nation. I am grateful to Governor Hogan for the opportunity to serve, and I look forward to watching the continued growth of this industry.”

Under his leadership, the first medical cannabis dispensaries opened their doors to Maryland patients in December 2017. Since, the Commission has licensed more than 130 medical cannabis growers, processors, and dispensaries and directed the dramatic growth of the industry, with gross revenue increasing from \$111 million in 2018 to more than \$600 million in 2021. The industry has also added more than 6,000 jobs to Maryland’s economy—a figure that could triple in the coming years.

During Chair Lopez’s tenure, the Commission focused its efforts on expanding opportunities for women- and minority-owned businesses, ensuring patient and product safety, and making the program more accessible to Marylanders. Significant program achievements led by Chair Lopez include:

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- In 2020, awarding 11 out of 11 grower and processor license preapprovals to minority and women-owned firms and making Maryland among the most diverse medical cannabis markets in the nation;
- Adopting emergency measures during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure safe and continued access to medical cannabis for Maryland’s patients and reduce face-to-face interactions, including authorizing telehealth, drive-through dispensing, curbside pickup, and expanded delivery;
- Developing rigorous laboratory testing standards for all medical cannabis products and working towards administering an MMCC reference lab to ensure product quality and patient safety;
- Implementing comprehensive edible cannabis regulations that allow patients to access a wide variety of products while protecting minors and others from accidental ingestion; and
- Expanding opportunities for small businesses to participate in the medical cannabis market by creating licensing categories for delivery, secure transport, security guard, and waste disposal companies and allowing businesses to use their licenses as collateral to secure much needed financing.

“It has been an incredible honor to work with Chair Brian Lopez since 2018,” said Commission Executive Director Will Tilburg. “I am grateful for his leadership, friendship, and dedication to this program and its patients. Maryland’s medical cannabis program is considered a leader in the nation for laboratory testing, health and safety standards, and economic growth due to Brian’s expertise and hard work.”

Tiffany Randolph, Esq., the Commission’s Vice Chair, will serve as Acting Chair until the Governor appoints a successor. Commissioner Randolph has served on the Commission since 2017 and led the Commission’s rulemaking efforts as Chair of the Policy Committee since 2018. She also serves on the Commission’s Executive Committee and Minority Affairs Subcommittee. Commissioner Randolph is counsel for an Annapolis-based firm, specializing in litigation and health care law.

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