

Natalie M. LaPrade Medical Cannabis Commission
April 22, 2015 Meeting
Johns Hopkins University Asthma and Allergy Center Auditorium
Bayview Medical Campus, Baltimore, Maryland
2:00 pm

MINUTES

Commissioners Present:

Paul W. Davies, Chair
Dario J. Broccolino
William C. Charles
Kevin W. Chen
John T. Gontrum
Michael A. Horberg
Robert A. Lavin
Deborah R. Miran
Cristina Gouin-Paul
Eric E. Sterling
Allison Taylor, DHMH, Office of the Secretary
Jon Traunfeld

Commissioner Present By Telephone:

Harry (Buddy) Robshaw, III, Vice-Chair

Staff

Hannah Byron, Executive Director, MMCC
Mary-jo Mather, MMCC
Kristen Neville, DHMH, Policy and Regulations
Erin Purdy, DHMH, Office of the Attorney General
Precious Wells, MMCC

Absent

Nancy Rosen-Cohen
Shawn P. McNamara

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Paul Davies called the meeting of the Natalie M. LaPrade Medical Cannabis Commission to order at 2:14 pm.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Chair Davies requested a motion to approve the March 24, 2015 meeting minutes. Commissioner Sterling made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Miran, and the March 24, 2015 minutes were approved unanimously by voice vote.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Paul Davies

Chairman Davies welcomed the attendees and offered greetings to those viewing the meeting via the streaming link, and introduced Ryan Vandrey, PhD, Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Vandrey offered words of welcome to the audience and communicated his thanks to the large audience who had come to learn more about the Commission's work. He stated that as part of the JHU research community, both on the Bayview Campus and at NIH, that his colleagues have extensive experience doing clinical research in substance and substance-abuse research. He expressed his excitement for future opportunities the research community will have once the Medical Cannabis Program develops.

Chairman Davies then stated that the Commission is in an interesting phase moving from its focus on the regulations and rapidly moving to the status of operationalizing the Program. Chairman Davies then turned over the meeting to Commissioner Sterling who would offer a summary of the regulatory changes in the April version of the draft regulations and House Bill 490.

COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS:

Executive Committee/Policy Committee: Eric Sterling

Commissioner Sterling described the high points contained in the April 19 draft regulations posted on the Commission's website. Mr. Sterling offered thanks on behalf of the Executive Committee to Delegate Morhaim, Senators Raskin and Zirkin and to Hannah Byron, Mary-jo Mather and Erin Purdy. He also acknowledged Commissioner Debby Miran for her outstanding patient advocacy, a driver in bringing the work to conclusion. He also acknowledged the members of the Policy Commission, specifically Tina Paul and Chris Charles, who provided important technical and conceptual guidance.

Commissioner Sterling proposed a Motion to accept the April 19 draft regulations on behalf of the Executive Commission, which was seconded by Allison Taylor. Commissioner Sterling then proposed a Motion to adopt two amendments to page 4 of the April 19 Draft Regulations to insert "licensed processor" to 10.62.03.02(c)(1) and to add to Renewal of Registration .03(d)(1)(a) "unrestricted" as an additional condition for renewal of a Certifying Physician's Registration to Certify.

Commissioner Sterling proposed a Motion to withdraw the January 23, 2015 draft regulations and adopt the April 19, 2015 regulations, which was seconded by Allison Taylor. Commissioner Chris Charles offered his disapproval that the requirement for a Clinical Director in a Dispensary was made an optional requirement, and encouraged those applicants to include a Clinical Director. He also stated that medical cannabis is a drug of last resort with drug interactions and wanted to go on the record as a professional pharmacist. Commissioners Charles and Broccolino voted against the adoption of the regulations, and Commissioner Chen abstained. The Motion to adopt the April 19th regulations was passed by a majority vote.

Executive Director's Report: Hannah Byron

Ms. Byron extended thanks to the Commissioners, Ryan Vandrey, and to those streaming the meeting, and noted that a recording of the meeting would be posted on the website. Ms. Byron noted that in addition to working on the regulations, she had been working on the necessary IT systems internally with DHMH staff, including developing physician, patient and caregiver registries.

Ms. Byron introduced the newest member of the Commission staff, Precious Wells. Ms. Wells received her B.A. in Social Science from Coppin State University and has over ten years experience in licensing. Ms. Wells will assist in standing up the new systems.

Ms. Byron stated that the Commission is in the process of developing applications for Growers, Processors and Dispensaries, which will be posted on the Commission website when final. She announced a new Communications team who will be assisting with the website, developing FAQs and other web content. Ms. Byron introduced Dave Curley, Senior Vice President, of Sandy Hillman Communications. Mr. Curley has worked with the casinos and many other groups who intersect with the regulatory environment.

Mr. Curley stated that he looked forward to working on this new initiative, and that Sandy Hillman Communications has worked on a number of groundbreaking issues, including casino gaming and energy issues involving many regulations during the orientation phase, and that he is looking forward to working with the Commission to build on a great foundation. The primary focus will be online to serve a wide variety of audiences, which will coordinate with the rollout of the timeline and implementing new content as additional milestones are created on the operations side of the Program.

Ms. Byron stated that there will be additional focus on a third party evaluation team to review the Grower, Processor and Dispensary applications. Ms. Byron then introduced guest speaker Hunter Holliman, of Americans for Safe Access, an organization which has partnered not only with Maryland, but with many other states. She announced that he would be leaving ASA to take a position in the private sector.

Mr. Holliman provided an outline of medical cannabis in other states, and presented a perspective of historical legislative trends and how Maryland is helping to drive some of these legislative trends. He stated that ASA is the largest medical cannabis advocacy organization, with over 50,000 members, providing grass roots lobbying, training and legal assistance to patients. He provided a state-by-state summary of cannabis laws and regulations. Mr. Holliman concluded that Maryland is truly leading the way on a lot of new legislative trends, including product safety issues.

Ms. Byron stated that Commissioner Robshaw had voted affirmatively by telephone in favor of adopting the April 19th regulations. She thanked the Hogan administration, Secretary Mitchell and Allison Taylor for their support during the legislative session, and also expressed her thanks for the great support she received from the Commission, including the Executive Committee and the Policy Committee, for their help with the development of the regulations.

Education Committee: Deborah Miran

Commissioner Miran recognized Rachelle Young of the Maryland Policy Project as a member of the audience and stated that Ms. Young would be leaving her advocacy position to work in the private sector. Commissioner Miran stated that she attended the ASA Conference in Washington DC, which was well attended with over 300 attendees, who were enlightened by recent scientific developments in the field of medical cannabis. She noted that the Patients Out of Time Conference would be held May 21-23rd in Florida, and that Anne Arundel Community College was enrolling students in the first accredited university course on the subject of the Business of Cannabis. The course syllabus contains horticulture, pharmaceutical and patient use information. Ms. Miran also stated that she had entered into a dialog with the Food and Drug Administration, and hoped to plan a face-to-face meeting in the near future to discuss the Maryland Medical Cannabis Program. She also mentioned the CNN three-part series on medical cannabis as an education tool. Ms. Miran stated that the Education Committee will resume their monthly meeting schedule to develop appropriate FAQs. Commissioner Sterling added that Sinai Hospital would be providing a one hour seminar on medical cannabis, and that he would be providing an overview of the Commission's draft regulations.

New Business

Commissioner Broccolino stated, as a point of order, that he wanted to have more time to review the draft regulations. Ms. Byron made a point of clarifying that the proposed draft regulations had been provided to all Commissioners in advance of the meeting, as well as posted on the Commission website. Mr. Sterling explained the next steps before final promulgation of the regulations through AELR and Secretary Mitchell's office, including the required 30 day comment period, with possible posting of the regulations in final form at the end of the summer.

Commissioner Chen commented that he had not reviewed the regulations and also inquired as to the work of the Research Committee and their responsibilities. Chair Davies responded that he is looking at the organizational structure of the Commission, and that the role of the Research Committee is high on the list.

Chairman Davies then announced the dates for the next four meetings, and also requested suggestions for future meeting locations. He thanked the Commission and staff for the expedited way they had incorporated the new legislation, and extended his thanks to Ryan Vandrey.

Adjournment

Chair Davies asked for a motion to adjourn, which was introduced by Commissioner Sterling and appropriately seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 3:17 pm.