

RPS FACT SHEET

April, 2010

WILL THE SMOKE EVER CLEAR?
Medical Marijuana in Colorado

**For more resources
and to find out
how to contact the
Regional Prevention
Consultant (RPC)
in your region, visit
www.rpscolorado.org**

**Regional Prevention Services
(RPS) is a regionally-based
system, funded by the
Colorado Department of
Human Services; Division of
Behavioral Health and
administered by OMNI
Institute.**

Since June 1, 2001 the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) Board of Health began accepting and processing applications for Medical Registry Identification cards.

Quick Stats

- 73% of all applicants are male
- Average age of patient is 40
- Severe pain and muscle spasms are the most reported conditions
- 69% of patients have designated a caregiver
- Over 800 different physicians have signed a Physician Certification for patients in Colorado.
- Applications received to date total nearly 20,000
- Approximately 13,000 Coloradoans are current card carriers

Overview of Amendment 20:

Amendment 20 allows patients diagnosed with a serious or chronic illness and their caregivers to legally possess or cultivate a specified amount of marijuana for medical purposes. This legislation requires physician's recommendation, creates a statewide, confidential registry of patients to issue credentials immunizing patients and caregivers from marijuana laws. For a patient unable to administer marijuana to himself or herself, or for minors under 18, caregivers determine the amount and frequency of use.

What is a caregiver?

- A caregiver is a person other than the patient and the patient's physician, who is eighteen years of age or older and has significant responsibility for managing the well-being of a patient who has a debilitating medical condition.
- There is no separate registration or application process for care-givers nor does the Registry maintain a listing of individuals interested in becoming a care-giver.
- A patient is allowed under the legislation to change caregivers at any time. It is up to the patient to notify a caregiver that the patient has removed them as a care-giver. The Registry does not send any notice to the caregiver.
- A patient's physician may not be their care-giver, the care-giver must be a person, and cannot be classified as a business, corporation, etc.
- There is no specific training or other requirement the care-giver must meet other than being selected by a patient. **EXCEPTION:** For patients who are less than 18 years of age, the primary care-giver must be a parent residing in Colorado.

Marijuana Medical Registry Experiences Rapid Growth

According to CDPHE's website, the registry has experienced rapid growth in the number of applications received. The growth has impacted already limited CDPHE resources and forced a prioritization of efforts to best meet mandatory needs. Where the state health agency fails to issue a registry identification card or fails to issue verbal or written notice of denial of such application within thirty-five days of receipt of an application, the patient's application for such card will be deemed to have been approved.



Important Message for Employers & Employees

Amendment 20 does not allow medical marijuana at work. Amendment 20 specifically states that nothing in the medical marijuana law “requires any employer to accommodate the medical use of marijuana in any work place.” Amendment 20 allows an employer to prohibit medical marijuana use on the job site. Colorado courts have not yet addressed all of the issues regarding medical marijuana card carriers but the fact still remains certain positions are subject to federal regulation regarding drug use in and out of the workplace and any state medical marijuana laws will have impact on federal regulations. Employers should update their anti-drug policies and remain aware of ongoing changes regarding the Colorado Medical Marijuana Program.

The American Medical Association states:

“To help facilitate scientific research and the development of cannabionoid-based medicines, the AMA adopted (a) new policy... This should not be viewed as an endorsement of state-based medical cannabis programs, the legalization of marijuana, or that scientific evidence on the therapeutic use of cannabis meets the current standards for a prescription drug product.”

Email from AMA Media Relations – Nov, 12, 2009

<http://medicalmarijuana.procon.org/viewsource.asp?ID=134>

Policy Statement H-95.952, American Medical Association, <http://www.ama-assn.org>

According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, in 2007, 14.4 million Americans aged 12 or older used marijuana at least once in the month prior to being surveyed. Marijuana is the most widely used illicit drug in America. Of the nearly 20 million current illicit drug users, 14.6 million (about 75 percent) are using marijuana.

Useful sites:

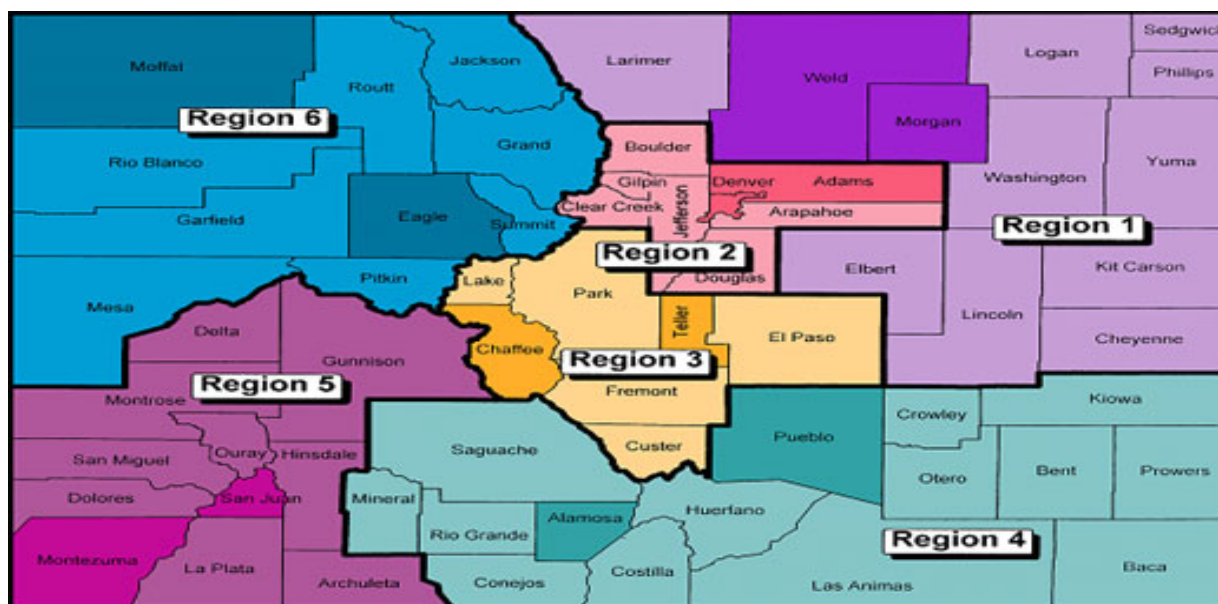
Colorado Department of Health & Environment	www.cdphe.state.co.us
Center for Disease Control – CDC	www.cdc.gov
National Institute on Drug Abuse	www.drugabuse.gov
Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services	www.samhsa.gov

<http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/hs/medicalmarijuana/statistics.html>

Office of the National Drug Control Policy (2004) The Economic Costs of Drug Abuse In the United States.



To find out more about
visit our website at www.rpscolorado.org



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