

Introducing the Medical Cannabis Patient Advisor

by Darryl Cotton, President 151 Farms 03/01/20

With the passage of the Compassionate Use Act (Prop 215) back in 1996, California was the first state to provide a path for the medical cannabis patient to, under a physicians referral, legally attain cannabis for treatment of their disease.

Twenty years later, in 2016, California took another step towards the mainstreaming of cannabis by passing the Adult Use of Marijuana Act (Prop 64) which allowed for recreational cannabis to be sold within the state without the need for a physicians recommendation.

Today, under AUMA we have licensed retail Cannabis Outlets (CO's) which has created an opportunity to coordinate the medical cannabis patients needs with the supply chain. This is an opportunity that didn't exist under Prop 215 guidelines or within what remains of the unlicensed cannabis distribution networks.

Not many people would argue that the recreational cannabis consumers needs are akin to that of the medical cannabis patients needs. A recreational cannabis consumer does not usually look to cannabis as a way of treating a medical condition but instead enjoys the short term benefits that come from its use. Generally their selection of a certain genetic and dosing levels is not in response to some life threatening condition they suffer from. On the other hand the medical cannabis patient may be looking to reduce their dependency on prescription drugs or would rely on medical cannabis where prescription drugs have not helped them at all.

These are important distinctions between the two type of cannabis consumers and should not be taken lightly by the CO's which dispense licensed cannabis advice and products. The differences in these cannabis consumers needs is why those who would be responsible for suggesting strains and dosing levels to the medical cannabis patient need to be trained in the most current science, standards and practices that would benefit the patient.



It is because of AUMA and our commitment to enhancing the patients quality of life we can now help reduce their dependence on addictive and debilitating opiates while helping to build a patient response database of genetics and dosing that helps define the Prevent, Repair or Relief with genetics and dosing levels these patients seek naturopathic treatment for. This is precisely why having a trained caregiver, the Medical Cannabis Patient Advisor (MCPA) in these CO's is so important to the future of medical cannabis treatments.

The Medical Cannabis Sale



Unlike the recreational cannabis consumer the medical cannabis consumer is a patient that when considering cannabis for their treatment requires sound, science based products and advice. Does the same salesperson have the time, training and skillsets necessary to adequately address the medical cannabis patients needs? Of course not. Which leads into how do we establish the licensed CO's value by providing for the medical cannabis consumer in a way never done before with tools that are already available in many of our state laws.

The one thing that most experienced, long term cannabis caregivers have in common is their sense of compassion and their putting their patients long term association with medical cannabis first. These caregivers know that through their initial consultation the patient will come to rely on them as to having the most up to date information regarding the medical benefits cannabis can provide for them and work to assure that both the psychoactive and non-psychoactive cannabis products are available as is needed to successfully help treat their condition and improve their quality of life. This is where the MCPA comes in to fill that need. The question is where will they come from and how will they be certified?



In many states Labor Peace Agreements (LPA) are required that provide for quality jobs that through collective bargaining provides employees with competitive wages, benefits and the training to those employers who operate CO businesses.

In California, AB-266 mandates that as a state licensee employing 20 or more employees the state requires the licensee to have a current LPA on file to maintain that license. Certain cities within CA, such as Los Angeles have lowered that number of employees to 10 or more.

Following in the footsteps of those who would organize an industry such as Cesar Chavez it's clear that the will to unite and provide the high caliber jobs in the licensed cannabis industry exists. But unless there is value to the consumer will legislating these positions be enough to sustain and grow the industry as a whole? We believe the answer to that question is yes but it will take adding values to the licensed CO such as an MCPA to provide values over what the unlicensed, unregulated business will offer at a lower cost.

What is a Medical Cannabis Patient Advisor?

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The MCPA; Turning Concept into Reality

We believe the licensed CO must have that the unlicensed cannabis provider does not, nor can they have without becoming licensed. That could be an MCPA certification which through union representation of the cannabis workers its real value is brought to both the employer and the medical cannabis patient. It is through this certification process that cannabis workers will aspire to a greater understanding of the plant and its benefits while the MCPA assures that through ongoing education the ultimate value to the patient would be the MCPA would be kept abreast of the latest developments in treating certain disease and conditions with cannabis. We're talking about not only providing good paying union jobs, but a real value to the medical cannabis patient while helping to address the very real social crises issues such as the growing dependence on opiates and homelessness that exist within our communities.

How do we turn this concept into a reality? For that you have to take the first step forward and acknowledge that if the war on drugs helped get us into this mess it will be the united effort to bring us together under the benefits that medical cannabis can provide our communities if it is treated as a value to the community, the employee and the patient. To get there it's going to take some dialogue with those unions that currently represent the cannabis worker. In the case of CA that union is the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW).

We want the unions to understand that we believe that they are the best resource available to increase the industry value and we would ask ALL CO's, regardless of the number of employees they have, throughout the country need to have union representation for their employees so this can be accomplished. There should not be a set aside for businesses with less than a certain number of employees. Union representation will result in benefits not only to the employees but to the medical cannabis patients that frequent these businesses. Other benefits that the unions and an MCPA certification would bring to the industry would come from;

- Unless the CO is RECREATIONAL SALES ONLY a minimum of one MCPA would have on hand during all hours of operation.
- The Recreational Sales Associate (RSA) could handle only recreational cannabis sales.
- The MCPA could handle either recreational or medical sales.
- The MCPA would be responsible for maintaining any medical cannabis patient records.
- The MCPA would be responsible for assuring accuracy of any products lab tests.
- Through union association within this class the MCPA would be responsible for sharing their findings amongst other MCPA's so that treatment associated databases could be developed.
- The MCPA would be responsible for maintaining supply chain genetics that served in patient treatment.

Historically cannabis has been a cooperative industry that unites against unjust law and regulation. Today we need to come together on something about this plant that is getting lost in the mad grabs to acquire limited licenses and monopolize the industry. That is not going to happen but to combat it we need to SUPPORT those candidates and politicians that believe in fair play and seeing this industry evolve to help those to help themselves. Medical Cannabis is the flag we plant on that hill.