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August 19, 2016

Re: Temporary Change in Enrollment Periods for Certain Persons Enrolled in the Medical Cannabis Program

Dear Law Enforcement Partners:

The Department of Health (“Department”) is issuing this notification to state, county and municipal law enforcement agencies to alert you of a recent issue that may impact law enforcement officials. Pursuant to the Lynn and Erin Compassionate Use Act, the Department administers the State’s Medical Cannabis Program (“Program”), and has experienced a significant increase in the number of persons applying to the Program. This increase has created a delay in issuing Patient Registry identification cards (i.e., patient enrollment cards) resulting in some patients’ Registry i.d. cards expiring while their renewal application is pending. The Department is expanding capacity within the Program in order to meet this new, unanticipated demand and is working to improve the processing time of applications being submitted to the Program.

In an effort to ensure patients’ access to medicine, the Department is temporarily extending enrollment periods by up to 60 days for medical cannabis patients whose cards expire between June 15 and December 31, 2016. The enrollment periods for these patients will be extended automatically, prior to approval of their renewal application and subsequent mailing of their patient enrollment card. Once a new card is issued to a patient, a new, one-year enrollment period is specified on the card.

**This means that there will be some patients whose cards have (on their face) expired, even though they are still actively enrolled in the Medical Cannabis Program. Because those individuals are still enrolled in the Program, they will still be protected under State law for the possession and use of cannabis. In order to verify a patient’s current enrollment status, law enforcement personnel will need to call the 24-hour law enforcement hotline that is listed on the back of the patient’s Registry i.d. card. That number is (505) 231-6740. Department staff will verify the person’s current enrollment status over the telephone.**

The Department has informed Medical Cannabis patients and licensed producers of this temporary change to patient enrollment expiration dates. Currently, the Department is taking about 42 days to process applications which is only about one week beyond the normal 35 days to process patient applications. However, the Department is implementing this temporary change in an abundance of caution, to ensure that patients’ enrollments in the Program do not lapse while applications are being processed.

The Department greatly appreciates the cooperation of law enforcement agencies as we work to address this issue. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Andrea Sundberg, Patient Services Manager, at (505) 827-2451.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "K. Lynn Gallagher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K".

Lynn Gallagher  
Secretary Designate