
Medical Cannabis Program Update for COVID-19 Response

March 20, 2020

On March 11, 2020, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham declared a statewide public health emergency. In response, the Medical Cannabis Program has implemented several changes in order to ensure services continue for patients.

Office Hours:

The Medical Cannabis Program is continuing to review applications, and mail patient, caregiver, and PPL ID cards, and provide customer service to patients. While the program is not accepting walk-in questions or applications, customer service staff can be reached at **505-827-2321** or through the program email at medical.cannabis@state.nm.us. Applications can be mailed to the program at:

Medical Cannabis Program
1190 S. St. Francis Drive
P.O. 26110
Santa Fe, NM 87502-6110

For Patients, Caregivers, and PPL Card Holders:

Individuals who have cards set to expire anytime from March 11, 2020 through June 13, 2020 will receive an extension of 90 calendar days. This is to ensure continued access and legal protection for qualified patients while ensuring enough time to see your health care provider. **The expiration date will be adjusted in the patient tracking system.** Due to the number of renewing patients this will affect, **new cards will not be issued** until you submit your renewal application. As usual, please mail in your completed application before this new expiration date to ensure you have constant access to your medicine. We encourage you to take advantage of telemedicine during this time for renewals. The Medical Cannabis Program directs the Licensed Non-Profit Producers (Dispensaries) to please note this change and inform all staff and patients being served.

LNPPs as “Essential Services”:

The Medical Cannabis Program has received inquiries from licensed Medical Cannabis Producers asking whether they constitute an “essential service” for purposes of item 4 at page 3 of the Public Health Order issued March 19, 2020 by the Department’s Cabinet Secretary, Kathyleen Kunkel. That provision states that “[t]ypical business environments that are not engaged in the provision of an essential service should limit operations to the greatest extent possible and minimize employee contact.” “Essential service” is defined in the Order as including the provision of goods and services necessary to sustain and promote public health and welfare. Consistent with the purposes of the Lynn and Erin Compassionate Use Act, NMSA 1978, § 26-2B-1 *et seq.*, the Department deems licensed medical cannabis producers to be “essential services” for purposes of the 3/19/20 public health order. Accordingly, LNPPs are not required to limit operations pursuant to that order.

Staffing for Licensed Non-Profit Producers (Dispensaries):

MEDICAL CANNABIS PROGRAM
Physical Address: 1474 Rodeo RD Suite 200 Santa Fe, NM 87505
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 26110 • Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502-6110
(505) 827-2321 • FAX: (505) 476-3025 • www.nmhealth.org



Due to the potential staffing shortage caused by COVID-19 and the protective measures implemented, the Medical Cannabis Program is temporarily suspending the requirement for the NM Criminal Background Check for new staff members until the submission of applications for LNPP relicensing (due on June 30, 2020). All other employee application documents must still be submitted. These new staff members will receive a Temporary Medical Cannabis Program Employee Card Approval Letter to carry with them identifying them as staff members. Law Enforcement will also be notified and will be able to verify employment with the Medical Cannabis Program as usual.

Providing Pick-up, Curb-side, or delivery service by Licensed Non-Profit Producers (Dispensaries):

As previously distributed to the LNPPs and Dispensaries, the Medical Cannabis Program recommends using pick-up, curbside, or delivery service. Pick up and curbside options do not require an amendment from the LNPP, however, delivery service does require an amendment in order to ensure policies are in place to ensure the safety of patients, staff, and safe delivery mechanisms. Once these are submitted, the License and Compliance staff are reviewing them as soon as possible in order to ensure safe access options for patients.

The March 19, 2020 Public Health Order prohibits gatherings of 10 or more people “in a single room or connected space”. Accordingly, LNPPs that provide counter service and/or pick-up from within their dispensaries are reminded to restrict the number of individuals in their store rooms to fewer than ten persons, to ensure compliance with the Order.

Staffing for Manufacturers:

Due to the potential staffing shortage caused by COVID-19 and the protective measures implemented, the Medical Cannabis Program is temporarily extending the deadline for the requirement for the NM Criminal Background Check for new staff members until June 30, 2020. All other employee application documents must still be submitted. These new staff members will receive a Temporary Medical Cannabis Program Employee Card Approval Letter to carry with them identifying them as staff members. Law Enforcement will also be notified and will be able to verify employment with the Medical Cannabis Program as usual.

Remember to follow the CDC and New Mexico Department of Health guidance regarding disinfection routines and practicing social distancing behaviors during this time.

NMDOH COVID-19 Webpage: <https://cv.nmhealth.org/>

CDC COVID-19 Webpage: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>

We understand this is an evolving situation, so please check the NMDOH – MCP Program website regularly for updates about the Medical Cannabis Program:

<https://nmhealth.org/about/mcp/svcs/>