

# **Medical Cannabis Advisory Board Meeting Minutes\***

March 7, 2023

## **I. Introductory Remarks and Call to Order (0:32)**

Stephanie Richmond PA-C called to order the regular meeting of the Medical Cannabis Advisory Board (MCAB) at 9:05 a.m. on March 7, 2023, using a WebEx Events Platform. General Instructions were given to panelists and attendees.

## **II. Roll Call (1:32)**

Stephanie Richmond conducted a roll call. The following persons were present:

Ariele Bauers	<u>present</u>
Mordechai Bronner	(absent)
Rachel Goodman	(absent)
Cynthia Griebler	<u>present</u>
Courtney Marquez	<u>present</u>
Allen Plymale	<u>present</u>
Stephanie Richmond	<u>present</u>
Traci White	<u>present</u>

(Six of nine Medical Cannabis Advisory Board Members were present at this time, so quorum was met, and the meeting started. (5:26))

**III. Introduction of New Board Members/Farewell to Past Members (5:30)**

Stephanie Richmond announced that Jean-Paul Dedam, MD, was no longer with the MCAB and wished to thank him for his tenure on the MCAB. Dr. Dedam was a very active participant on the MCAB and was also the alternate Chairperson. Given the vacancy in the alternate Chairperson position, nominations were put forth. Ariele Bauers nominated herself and this nomination was seconded by Stephanie Richmond. A vote was held, and Ariele Bauers was elected by a tally of 6 – 0 into the role of alternate Chairperson. This tally is reflected below:

- Ariele Bauers            yes
- Cynthia Griebler       yes
- Courtney Marquez      yes
- Allen Plymale           yes
- Stephanie Richmond    yes
- Traci White              yes

**IV. Approval of minutes (7:45)**

Stephanie Richmond made a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. This motion was seconded by Traci White.

**V. Medical Cannabis Program (MCP) Update**

Patient Services Information: (8:15)

Dr. Dominick Zurlo presented a brief update with regards to the program. He acknowledged that the number of actively enrolled patients has continued to decrease each month since the beginning of Adult-use sales. This trend was anticipated and is expected to continue until leveling off at some point in the future. Attendees were invited to visit the MCP webpage to review all statistics that are posted there. Dr. Zurlo also highlighted many of the cannabis-related bills that were part of the current legislative session. Attendees were invited to visit the New Mexico Legislative webpage (nmlegis.gov) if they desired further information about the cannabis-related bills and their potential impact on the MCAB and MCP.

### Thursday Medical Cannabis Forum Update: (11:15)

Dr. Gary French informed the MCAB that the Thursday Medical Cannabis Forums for Certifying Providers have continued since the last MCAB meeting and have been very successful. Many new providers are attending the Thursday event and likely represent providers who have recently signed up to use the Online Patient Portal. Since January, the number of Medical Providers who have registered to use the portal has doubled and continues to grow. Additionally, Dr. French reminded those in attendance, that the Medical Cannabis Program would no longer be accepting paper applications after April 1, 2023.

## **VI. Discussion of Petitions (13:14)**

Stephanie Richmond presented the rules to be followed while the petition is presented to the MCAB. Additionally, it was noted that this petition was being submitted by one of the board members who would therefore recuse themselves when it came time to vote.

Stephanie Richmond introduced the petition by informing the MCAB members that “insomnia is a very common medical complaint that generates over 5 million office visits a year in the US. Recent research has shown that later sleep timing and greater variability in sleep are associated with adverse health outcomes such as increased risk of depression, cardiovascular diseases and developing dementia. Cannabis may have a short-term benefit on improving sleep time by reducing sleep onset latency, creating a greater ease of falling asleep and increased total sleep time. It has also been shown to improve self-reported sleep scores. Many comorbid diagnoses are already approved conditions for medical cannabis in New Mexico. These include anxiety, cancer, PTSD, Parkinson’s, fibromyalgia, chronic pain and sleep apnea. Cannabis does not have the same adverse reactions as conventional pharmacologic therapies. It is less addictive than benzodiazepines and is safer in both accidental and intentional overdose to all current conventional pharmacologic treatments.”

Additionally, Stephanie referenced the November 2022 survey: Examination of Experiences, Behaviors and Outcomes of Medical Cannabis Patients and Providers in New Mexico as it also mentions cannabis as a commonly sought out treatment for insomnia. Patients most commonly reported sleep as the medical condition or symptom they used cannabis for that was not previously approved by a health provider (54%).

Stephanie proposed that by aligning the research and how patients are utilizing the medical cannabis will further create conversations with patients and their medical providers.

Ariele Bauers agreed with the petition and stated that it is important to view the use of medical cannabis from the perspective of harm reduction considering polypharmacy of sedating medication when it comes to insomnia treatment.

Allen Plymale agreed with the petition and that medical cannabis has helped to reduce the use of narcotics and benzodiazepines.

Cindy Griebler agreed and states that cannabis is an option with the appropriate strain selection in its use for insomnia.

Tracey White agreed with the petition and how it helps to decrease habit forming medications.

Ariele Bauers mentioned that it is important to have a discussion with patients to make them aware of how to avoid cannabis use disorder and that the benefits outweigh the risk of a potential use disorder.

Courtney Marquez mentioned that the cannabis also helps to offset the effects of patients on high dose steroids used in the patient population she works with in oncology.

Stephanie Richmond motioned to approve the petition to recommend Insomnia as a qualifying diagnosis for the Medical Cannabis program.

Allen Plymale seconded.

The remaining five members of the MCAB who were not part of the petition presentation were asked to vote “yes” to approve or “no” to disapprove. This tally is reflected below:

Ariele Bauers	<u>yes</u>
Cynthia Griebler	<u>yes</u>
Courtney Marquez	<u>yes</u>
Allen Plymale	<u>yes</u>
Stephanie Richmond	<u>abstains</u>
Traci White	<u>yes</u>

By a vote of 5 – 0 (with one abstaining), the MCAB voted to approve petition 2023-001 and add Insomnia to the list of qualifying conditions for enrollment in the Medical Cannabis Program. (24:20)

## **VII. Public Comments (24:42)**

Kristina Caffrey – Ms. Caffrey shared her thoughts with regards to the decreasing number of patients enrolled in the Medical Cannabis Program. Additionally, Ms. Caffrey shared her impression of the November 2022 survey: Examination of Experiences, Behaviors and Outcomes of Medical Cannabis Patients and Providers in New Mexico.

Attendees were again invited to send in public comments in writing the Medical Cannabis Program’s general email address.

## **VIII. Set date for next Medical Cannabis Advisory Board Meeting (29:00)**

Stephanie Richmond canvassed the Board members and made a motion to hold the next MCAB Meeting in May 2023. This motion was seconded by Allen Plymale. Discussion ensued and consensus was reached to hold the meeting on May 16<sup>th</sup>. Stephanie motioned to convene the next meeting on Tuesday, May 16, 2023, from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. This motion was seconded by Ariele Bauers.

## **IX. Adjournment (1:05:09)**

Stephanie Richmond PA-C adjourned the meeting at 9:36 a.m.

Minutes submitted by: Gary J. French, MD/ Medical Director NMDOH MCP

**\*(Please note that an audiovisual recording of the meeting in its entirety is available for viewing and can be found on the Medical Cannabis Program Webpage. These minutes are a short summary of the meeting’s events and serve to highlight key features of the meeting.)**