



Commission Authorizes Curbside Pickup at Massachusetts Medical Marijuana Treatment Centers to Limit COVID-19 Transmission

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WORCESTER—Medical Marijuana Treatment Centers (MTCs) in Massachusetts will soon be able to offer curbside pickup of medical marijuana and marijuana products for registered qualifying patients and caregivers in order to limit Coronavirus (“COVID-19”) transmission during

Massachusetts' state of emergency, the Cannabis Control Commission announced Friday.

The Commission issued an administrative order temporarily authorizing the activity pursuant to the Administration's declaration and essential services and revised gatherings order that deemed MTC services essential to the Commonwealth. Throughout Massachusetts' state of emergency, MTCs will have the option to add sales by phone or electronic means and the transfer of marijuana and marijuana products in the parking area of their premises or to an individual at the entrance to the MTC. In the interest of public safety, cash payments will only be accepted inside the facility.

When using curbside pickup, MTC agents will first need to verify the age, registration status, and patient allotment of the patient or caregiver before they complete their purchase. Similar to the state's requirements for entering a medical dispensary, agents will be prohibited from conducting a transaction in which any individuals under the age of 21 are present who are not registered with the state's Medical Use of Marijuana Program (Program). Video camera coverage of all areas where marijuana is handled or dispensed will still be required.

MTCs must submit to the Commission a standard operating procedure for curbside pickup, including an updated facility layout identifying designated curbside sales area(s), traffic queuing plans, and signage to direct patients. They also must notify municipalities, including police and health officials, of their plans, and maintain compliance with their host community agreement and all other applicable local rules, regulations, ordinances, and by-laws of their city or town while offering curbside operations.

"Safe patient access during Massachusetts' state of emergency requires regulatory responsiveness and intentional protocols aimed at reducing exposure to Coronavirus," Executive Director Shawn Collins said. "I am proud the Commission has deployed several system and policy enhancements to the Medical Use of Marijuana Program that both improve the patient

experience and maintain compliant operations in the face of unanticipated disruptions to our way of life.”

As the result of the Governor's Order Expanding Access to Telehealth Services and to Protect Health Care Providers, the Commission also has enabled Certifying Health Care Providers to apply for a waiver that allows for the certification of new patients using telehealth. Telehealth renewals are already authorized under the Commission's medical use of marijuana regulations.

The Commission's response to the Governor's order continues work done by the agency to facilitate access for patients. Since the Commission assumed oversight of the Program in December 2018, it has implemented significant service upgrades, including the elimination of the Program's \$50 registration fee, to ensure registered qualifying patients in the Commonwealth have access to medical grade marijuana. As of March, there are more than 67,700 certified patients in Massachusetts.

The Commission provides guidance for prospective patients to register for the Program. Through the use of new technology and the Program's migration to the Massachusetts Cannabis Industry Portal (MassCIP), the Commission has streamlined patient registration and eliminated a historic backlog of several thousand registrants. Direct integration between the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles and MassCIP now allows patients to receive automatic verification of identification data when they register or renew their program certification using their Massachusetts driver's license. Last summer, the Commission also launched Initial Access Certification of patients and caregivers which permits immediate entry into an MTC using temporary registration prior to the issuance of an annual registration card.

The Commission remains a resource for licensees to ensure they comply with the Administration's order as well as with regulations, guidance, and bulletins that will continue to be released during this unprecedented time. To date, the Commission has issued the following bulletins relative to the COVID-19 state of emergency:

- March 23 bulletins
 - [Licensees](#)
 - [Certifying Health Care Providers and Medical Marijuana Patients](#)
 - [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- March 20 bulletin: [Telehealth Consultations for New Patients](#)
- March 18 bulletin: [Licensees' Preparation for COVID-19](#)
- March 13 bulletin: [Licensees' Preparation for COVID-19](#)

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