

## **New York State Department of Health Announces Opioid Replacement Now a Qualifying Condition for Medical Marijuana**

### **[Emergency Regulations](#) Effective Immediately**

#### **Temporary ID Cards Will be Available for Certified Patients to Purchase Products More Quickly**

ALBANY, NY (July 12, 2018) - The New York State Department of Health today announced the filing of [emergency regulations](#) adding any condition for which an opioid could be prescribed as a qualifying condition for medical marijuana.

Effective immediately, registered practitioners may certify patients to use medical marijuana as a replacement for opioids, provided that the precise underlying condition for which an opioid would otherwise be prescribed is stated on the patient's certification. This allows patients with severe pain that doesn't meet the definition of chronic pain to use medical marijuana as a replacement for opioids.

In addition, the regulation adds opioid use disorder as an associated condition. This allows patients with opioid use disorder who are enrolled in a certified treatment program to use medical marijuana as an opioid replacement.

Plans to add opioid replacement as a qualifying condition for medical marijuana were [first announced](#) last month.

"Medical marijuana has been shown to be an effective treatment for pain that may also reduce the chance of opioid dependence," said New York State Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker. "Adding opioid replacement as a qualifying condition for medical marijuana offers providers another treatment option, which is a critical step in combatting the deadly opioid epidemic affecting people across the state."

Opioid replacement joins the following 12 qualifying conditions under the state's Medical Marijuana Program: cancer; HIV infection or AIDS; amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS); Parkinson's disease; multiple sclerosis; spinal cord injury with spasticity; epilepsy; inflammatory bowel disease; neuropathy; Huntington's disease; post-traumatic stress disorder; and chronic pain.

These emergency regulations went into effect on a temporary basis on July 12, 2018. The Department also filed a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on July 12, 2018, commencing the process of permanently adopting the regulations. The permanent regulations will be published in the *New York State Register* on August 1, 2018, and will be subject to a 60-day public comment period.

In addition, within the next week, certified patients and designated caregivers will be able to print temporary registry ID cards. This will allow them to purchase medical marijuana products more quickly after registering for the program. Patients may use the temporary registry ID card in conjunction with a government issued photo identification to purchase medical marijuana

products from a registered organization's dispensing facility. Prior to this enhancement to the Medical Marijuana Data Management System, it could take 7 to 10 days for patients and their caregivers to receive their registry identification cards after their registration was approved.

Other recent enhancements to New York's Medical Marijuana Program include adopting new regulations to improve the program for patients, practitioners and registered organizations; authorizing five additional registered organizations to manufacture and dispense medical marijuana; adding chronic pain and PTSD as qualifying conditions; permitting home delivery; and empowering nurse practitioners and physician assistants to certify patients.

As of July 10, 2018, there are 62,256 certified patients and 1,735 registered practitioners participating in the program.

For more information on New York's Medical Marijuana Program, visit: [https://www.health.ny.gov/regulations/medical\\_marijuana/](https://www.health.ny.gov/regulations/medical_marijuana/).