Designated Caregivers

Most designated caregivers are family members or persons who are close to and trusted by the registered qualifying patient. The designated caregiver can purchase medical cannabis on behalf of the patient.

Designated caregivers may also prepare medical cannabis for use by the patient – for example, breaking up the cannabis flower for vaporization, which may be difficult for a registered qualifying patient diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis or affected by Rheumatoid Arthritis.

Designated caregivers may transport medical cannabis on behalf of the registered qualifying patient. Medical cannabis should be transported in a locked container (e.g., a locked briefcase or suitcase) in the trunk of the vehicle. Medical cannabis should never be transported in the passenger area of a vehicle.

The registered designated caregiver and qualifying patient should always carry their medical cannabis registry card.

Where Can I Learn More?

About Us

The IDPH Office of Health Promotion, Medical Cannabis Registry Program implements and oversees the patient registry program which provides qualifying patients access to cannabis for medical use. Program-related materials including applications and physician education resources is available at http://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/prevention-wellness/medical-cannabis.

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ILLINOIS MEDICAL CANNABIS REGISTRY PROGRAM:
GUIDE FOR DESIGNATED CAREGIVERS

Illinois Medical Cannabis Registry Program

On August 1, 2013, Illinois enacted the Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Pilot Program Act ("Act"), Public Act 98-0122. The Medical Cannabis Patient Program (MCPP) allows persons who are diagnosed with a qualifying debilitating medical condition to register with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) in order to obtain access to cannabis (marijuana) for medical use.

An individual diagnosed with one or more qualifying debilitating conditions is eligible to apply for a medical cannabis registry identification card. The qualifying patient must obtain a written certification from a physician specifying their debilitating condition, unless they are a veteran receiving health services at a VA facility. Veterans must submit one year of medical records from the VA facility where they receive services.

The Act is effective until July 1, 2020.

What is a designated caregiver?

In a general context, a "caregiver" is simply a person who provides assistance to someone who is seriously ill, injured, or disabled, whether mentally, physically, or both. In Illinois, a registered designated caregiver can assist the registered qualifying patient with the use and purchase of medical cannabis. A registry identification card is required to enter a medical cannabis dispensary.

To qualify for a designated caregiver identification card, an individual must:

- Be a resident of the State of Illinois at the time of application and remain a resident during participation in the program;
- Serve only one registered qualifying patient;
- Be at least 21 years of age; and
- Pay an application fee.

Persons who have been diagnosed with six months or fewer to live by a licensed physician, qualify for a free Terminal Illness Registry Card and may designate a caregiver free-of-charge.

A qualifying patient under 18 years of age may identify two designated caregivers. There is no fee for the first designated caregiver.

Caregivers are allowed to retain their CDL-driver's license and/or school bus permit.

Role of the Designated Caregiver

The registered designated caregiver plays a very important role for the registered qualifying patient. Once the designated caregiver receives a registry card, they may enter a licensed medical cannabis dispensary and make a purchase on behalf of the patient. They may also assist the patient with the use of medical cannabis.

Ideally, the qualifying patient should select a designated caregiver at the time of application for a registry identification card; but a patient can add a caregiver later.

The registered designated caregiver ***cannot***:

- Serve more than one registered patient;
- Use medical cannabis;
- Grow, possess, or distribute medical cannabis; and/or
- Purchase and possess more than the maximum amount of medical cannabis allowed for the patient during any two week period.