

Medical cannabis regulations discussed at public hearing

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The New Mexico Department of Health hosted a public hearing Nov. 22 in Santa Fe regarding proposed rule changes to its Medical Cannabis Program, addressing a variety of issues including product packaging for patients, reciprocity for out-of-state medical patients, and additional testing of both cannabis and the products derived from it.

Due to inclement weather and a two-hour delay for all state government offices, a second hearing was scheduled by Department of Health Cabinet Secretary Kathy Kunkel.

“Although it was still a good turn-out from the public, I want to assure we receive all the feedback and comment to have the best rules possible. For that reason, we will schedule a second hearing in January to assure all voices will be heard,” she said.

The date for the planned January hearing has not yet been announced.

The hearing Nov. 22 focused on the second set of proposed rule changes in 2019. It addressed both statutory mandates enacted by the Legislature earlier this year in [Senate Bill 406](#) and additional rules to include:

- Requirements for testing of both dried cannabis and cannabis-derived products, such as edibles and other items. It is proposed they be tested for the presence of heavy metals, certain pesticides, potency, and moisture content.

- New requirements for Medical Cannabis Program manufacturers - those that create the

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cannabis-derived products using dried cannabis provided by the program's licensed non-profit producers. Proposed requirements range from a rise in application fees to proof of security and law enforcement notification systems.

- Prohibition of certain additives to products intended to be consumed by inhalation, such as vaping cartridges. The list includes vitamin E acetate.
- Prevention of packaging that displays content (such as cartoon characters) that may lead to children mistaking a medical product for candy or ordinary food.
- Creation of cannabis consumption areas to be operated at approved dispensary locations.
- Creation of reciprocity rules allowing visiting medical cannabis patients from other U.S. states to enter and purchase medicine in New Mexico dispensaries.

As of Oct. 31, the NMDOH Medical Cannabis Program had more than 78,000 patients.

For more information about the program and qualifying health conditions:
nmhealth.org/about/mcp/svcs/info/