

DOH to issue medical cannabis licenses

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SANTA FE — The New Mexico Department of Health (DOH) announced Oct. 5 that it will be issuing licenses to 12 applicants who applied to become licensed non-profit producers (LNPPs) in the state's Medical Cannabis Program. Licensure is contingent upon the applicants' acceptance and demonstration of regulatory compliance. This will bring the total number of LNPPs to 35.

Secretary of Health Retta Ward reviewed the 17 highest scoring applications, which represent the top 20 percent of total applications submitted. A four-member Scoring Committee of DOH employees recommended to Secretary Ward that she review the 17 highest scoring applications, and that she make her selection from that pool. She adopted that recommendation.

In making her decision about which applicants to license, Secretary Ward considered the individual and aggregate scores given by the Scoring Committee, as well as the notations made by the Scoring Committee members. She also reviewed and evaluated the content and overall quality of each application, including other factors such as the quality of the applicants' production plans, with an emphasis on location, safety and security components, the quality of the applicants' distribution plans, and the products that applicants planned to sell to qualified patients.

The applicants selected for licensure are in the following counties: Bernalillo (8); Chaves (1); Santa Fe (1); Taos (1); Valencia (1). The applicants demonstrated in the application a clear plan to serve patients in underserved communities.

The DOH will begin setting up site visits with selected applicants, which is one of the requirements as part of the licensing process. The timeframe for the new LNPPs to begin serving patients will vary due to a number of factors.

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Consistent with Governor Martinez's direction for more transparency in the Medical Cannabis Program, the Department of Health is working on a rule change so that LNPP information is public. The DOH anticipates publication of the proposed rule changes, and conducting a public hearing sometime this fall.

There are 17,537 patients in the program and 21 qualifying conditions.