

CHAPTER 160

AN ACT concerning medical marijuana and amending P.L.2009, c.307.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. Section 5 of P.L.2009, c.307 (C.24:6I-5) is amended to read as follows:

C.24:6I-5 Certification authorizing medical use of marijuana.

5. a. Medical use of marijuana by a qualifying patient may be authorized pursuant to a certification which meets the requirements of this act. In order to provide such certification, a physician shall be licensed and in good standing to practice in the State.

The certification shall attest that the above criteria have been met.

b. The provisions of subsection a. of this section shall not apply to a qualifying patient who is a minor unless the custodial parent, guardian, or person who has legal custody of the minor receives from the physician an explanation of the potential risks and benefits of the medical use of marijuana and consents in writing that the minor patient has that person's permission for the medical use of marijuana and that the person will control the acquisition and possession of the medical marijuana and any related paraphernalia from the alternative treatment center. The physician shall document the explanation of the potential risks and benefits in the minor patient's medical record.

2. Section 7 of P.L.2009, c.307 (C.24:6I-7) is amended to read as follows:

C.24:6I-7 Applications for permits to operate as alternative treatment center; regulations.

7. a. The department shall accept applications from entities for permits to operate as alternative treatment centers, and may charge a reasonable fee for the issuance of a permit under this section. The department shall seek to ensure the availability of a sufficient number of alternative treatment centers throughout the State, pursuant to need, including at least two each in the northern, central, and southern regions of the State. The first two centers issued a permit in each region shall be nonprofit entities, and centers subsequently issued permits may be nonprofit or for-profit entities.

An alternative treatment center shall be authorized to acquire a reasonable initial and ongoing inventory, as determined by the department, of marijuana seeds or seedlings and paraphernalia, possess, cultivate, plant, grow, harvest, process, display, manufacture, deliver, transfer, transport, distribute, supply, sell, or dispense marijuana, or related supplies to qualifying patients or their primary caregivers who are registered with the department pursuant to section 4 of this act. An alternative treatment center shall not be limited in the number of strains of medical marijuana cultivated, and may package and directly dispense marijuana to qualifying patients in dried form, oral lozenges, topical formulations, or edible form, or any other form as authorized by the commissioner. Edible form shall include tablets, capsules, drops or syrups and any other form as authorized by the commissioner. Edible forms shall be available only to qualifying patients who are minors.

Applicants for authorization as nonprofit alternative treatment centers shall be subject to all applicable State laws governing nonprofit entities, but need not be recognized as a 501(c)(3) organization by the federal Internal Revenue Service.

b. The department shall require that an applicant provide such information as the department determines to be necessary pursuant to regulations adopted pursuant to this act.

c. A person who has been convicted of a crime involving any controlled dangerous substance or controlled substance analog as set forth in chapter 35 of Title 2C of the New

Jersey Statutes except paragraph (4) of subsection a. of N.J.S.2C:35-10, or any similar law of the United States or any other state shall not be issued a permit to operate as an alternative treatment center or be a director, officer, or employee of an alternative treatment center, unless such conviction occurred after the effective date of this act and was for a violation of federal law relating to possession or sale of marijuana for conduct that is authorized under this act.

d. (1) The commissioner shall require each applicant seeking a permit to operate as an alternative treatment center to undergo a criminal history record background check. For purposes of this section, the term "applicant" shall include any owner, director, officer, or employee of an alternative treatment center. The commissioner is authorized to exchange fingerprint data with and receive criminal history record background information from the Division of State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation consistent with the provisions of applicable federal and State laws, rules, and regulations. The Division of State Police shall forward criminal history record background information to the commissioner in a timely manner when requested pursuant to the provisions of this section.

An applicant shall submit to being fingerprinted in accordance with applicable State and federal laws, rules, and regulations. No check of criminal history record background information shall be performed pursuant to this section unless the applicant has furnished his written consent to that check. An applicant who refuses to consent to, or cooperate in, the securing of a check of criminal history record background information shall not be considered for a permit to operate, or authorization to be employed at, an alternative treatment center. An applicant shall bear the cost for the criminal history record background check, including all costs of administering and processing the check.

(2) The commissioner shall not approve an applicant for a permit to operate, or authorization to be employed at, an alternative treatment center if the criminal history record background information of the applicant reveals a disqualifying conviction as set forth in subsection c. of this section.

(3) Upon receipt of the criminal history record background information from the Division of State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the commissioner shall provide written notification to the applicant of his qualification for or disqualification for a permit to operate or be a director, officer, or employee of an alternative treatment center.

If the applicant is disqualified because of a disqualifying conviction pursuant to the provisions of this section, the conviction that constitutes the basis for the disqualification shall be identified in the written notice.

(4) The Division of State Police shall promptly notify the commissioner in the event that an individual who was the subject of a criminal history record background check conducted pursuant to this section is convicted of a crime or offense in this State after the date the background check was performed. Upon receipt of that notification, the commissioner shall make a determination regarding the continued eligibility to operate or be a director, officer, or employee of an alternative treatment center.

(5) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection b. of this section to the contrary, the commissioner may offer provisional authority for an applicant to be an employee of an alternative treatment center for a period not to exceed three months if the applicant submits to the commissioner a sworn statement attesting that the person has not been convicted of any disqualifying conviction pursuant to this section.

(6) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection b. of this section to the contrary, no employee of an alternative treatment center shall be disqualified on the basis of any conviction disclosed by a criminal history record background check conducted pursuant to

this section if the individual has affirmatively demonstrated to the commissioner clear and convincing evidence of rehabilitation. In determining whether clear and convincing evidence of rehabilitation has been demonstrated, the following factors shall be considered:

(a) the nature and responsibility of the position which the convicted individual would hold, has held or currently holds;

(b) the nature and seriousness of the crime or offense;

(c) the circumstances under which the crime or offense occurred;

(d) the date of the crime or offense;

(e) the age of the individual when the crime or offense was committed;

(f) whether the crime or offense was an isolated or repeated incident;

(g) any social conditions which may have contributed to the commission of the crime or offense; and

(h) any evidence of rehabilitation, including good conduct in prison or in the community, counseling or psychiatric treatment received, acquisition of additional academic or vocational schooling, successful participation in correctional work-release programs, or the recommendation of those who have had the individual under their supervision.

e. The department shall issue a permit to a person to operate as an alternative treatment center if the department finds that issuing such a permit would be consistent with the purposes of this act and the requirements of this section are met and the department has verified the information contained in the application. The department shall approve or deny an application within 60 days after receipt of a completed application. The denial of an application shall be considered a final agency decision, subject to review by the Appellate Division of the Superior Court. The department may suspend or revoke a permit to operate as an alternative treatment center for cause, which shall be subject to review by the Appellate Division of the Superior Court.

f. A person who has been issued a permit pursuant to this section shall display the permit at the premises of the alternative treatment center at all times when marijuana is being produced, or dispensed to a registered qualifying patient or the patient's primary caregiver.

g. An alternative treatment center shall report any change in information to the department not later than 10 days after such change, or the permit shall be deemed null and void.

h. An alternative treatment center may charge a registered qualifying patient or primary caregiver for the reasonable costs associated with the production and distribution of marijuana for the cardholder.

i. The commissioner shall adopt regulations to:

(1) require such written documentation of each delivery of marijuana to, and pickup of marijuana for, a registered qualifying patient, including the date and amount dispensed, to be maintained in the records of the alternative treatment center, as the commissioner determines necessary to ensure effective documentation of the operations of each alternative treatment center;

(2) monitor, oversee, and investigate all activities performed by an alternative treatment center; and

(3) ensure adequate security of all facilities 24 hours per day, including production and retail locations, and security of all delivery methods to registered qualifying patients.

3. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved September 10, 2013.