



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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QUALIFIED MEDICAL MARIJUANA USERS URGED TO RENEW THEIR CERTIFICATION BEFORE DEC. 12, 2014

BLACKOUT PERIOD PLANNED FROM DEC. 12 – 31 AS PROGRAM TRANSITIONS TO HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

HONOLULU – Hawaii patients whose medical marijuana certification is expiring by the end of December are urged to renew their certification with the Department of Public Safety before Dec. 12, 2014.

A patient with a debilitating medical condition must obtain a signed physician's medical statement that the potential benefits of the medical use of marijuana would likely outweigh the health risks for the qualifying patient before applying for a written certification from the Department of Public Safety.

The medical marijuana program has been in operation for 14 years and, as required in Act 177, is being transferred to the Department of Health, effective Jan. 1, 2015. There will be a planned blackout period from Dec. 12 to 31, 2014 in which no certifications will be issued to prepare for this transition.

Although federal law prohibits the use of marijuana, Hawaii is one of 23 states and the District of Columbia that has legalized marijuana for medicinal purposes, acknowledging the health benefits of medical marijuana use.

Certifications are good for 12 months and are issued on an annual basis. Patients must possess a current certification that allows lawful cultivation, possession, and use of marijuana for medical purposes. This certification must be available to law enforcement officials at any time to avoid potential legal action. The Department of Health will honor all current Department of Public Safety medical marijuana certifications through their expiration date.

The current registration fee to receive a medical marijuana card from the Department of Public Safety is \$25. In keeping with Act 177, commencing Jan. 1, 2016 medical marijuana applications will be submitted through an online process to the Department of Health and the registration fee will increase to \$38.50 including the portal fee. Online payment will be available and is encouraged for faster services.

For questions about the transition, patients may call the Medical Marijuana Information Hotline for recorded messages at 733-2177. Toll free numbers have also been established for neighbor island residents: Hawaii Island residents may call 974-4000, ext. 32177; Maui residents may call 984-2400, ext. 32177; and Kauai residents may call 274-3141, ext. 32177. For the most up-to-date information, visit the new Department of Health, Medical Marijuana Program's website at health.hawaii.gov/medicalmarijuana.

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