



# Medical Cannabis UPDATE

Ensuring Hawaii's qualified patients have access to safe medical cannabis products through an efficient system of responsible, licensed dispensaries

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## Maintaining a Strong Relationship with Your Doctor

With two medical cannabis dispensaries now open, and more anticipated to open in the near future, Hawaii's registered patients must carefully weigh information on potency and efficacy of medical cannabis products.

Obtaining accurate information and knowing who to turn to for answers may be a challenge for patients.

### Make Your Doctor Your Go-To Source for Medical Cannabis Advice

The Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) continues to make patient safety a top priority, and encourages patients to always confer with their physician on questions relating to their medical condition and the best treatment options including decisions on the most appropriate use of medical cannabis, according to **Peter Whiticar**, Chief of DOH's Harm Reduction Services Branch.

"Physicians should be the first ones that patients turn to for help," Peter said. "Your doctor knows your medical history and can help you understand how medical cannabis can affect you."

Peter noted that physicians do not write medical cannabis prescriptions, and many patients are left to make their own decisions on dosages or in consultation with "budtenders" at the medical cannabis dispensaries.

Some dispensaries have pharmacists on staff, while others do not. DOH does not certify these dispensary employees and training

is the responsibility of the dispensaries until a certification process is in place. 🌿

## Mahalo and Aloha to Scottina "Scotty" Ruis!



The Hawaii Department of Health bids aloha to **Scottina Malia Ruis**, LSW, MBA, who served as

our Medical Cannabis Program Coordinator for our Patient Registry Program for the past two and a half years. Scotty recently got married and has relocated to New Mexico.

"Scotty successfully led the transition of the patient registry program from the Department of Public Safety to the Department of Health," said **Peter Whiticar**, Chief of DOH's Harm Reduction Services Branch. "The registry program was previously a paper-based system and Scotty transformed it into a modern, online system to greatly improve efficiency."

Scotty was also instrumental in significantly reducing the turn-around time for registered patients to receive their 329 registration cards that allowed patients to grow and use medical cannabis.

Scotty created a new section on the DOH's website devoted to helping

patients gain access to details about the medical cannabis program, including the ability to register online.

The Patient Registry team has been fully trained to ensure the registration cards will continue to be disseminated in a timely manner.

Both **Peter Whiticar** and **Tamara Whitney** will manage the Medical Cannabis Patient Registry Program until Scotty's vacant position is filled permanently. 🌿

### RENEWAL APPLICANTS:

**Please be advised that your new 329 card does not become valid until your previous 329 card expires.** Only one (1) 329 card will be valid at any given time. This may affect entry into a dispensary. **Please use your previous 329 card at dispensaries until it expires.**

Your new 329 registration card will automatically activate once the previous one expires. If you have any questions or concerns

please email:  
medicalcannabis@doh.hawaii.gov.