

Alabama Medical Cannabis Commission Meeting

Minutes

January 13, 2022

The Alabama Medical Cannabis Commission met on January 13, 2022, in the RSA Dexter Conference Room. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Steven Stokes at 1:01 P.M.

Mr. Dwight Gamble led the Commission's invocation. The roll was taken with a quorum present. Commission members present for the meeting were Dr. Steven Stokes, Mr. Rex Vaughn, Dr. William Saliski, Dr. Sam Blakemore, Mr. Dwight Gamble, Dr. Angela Martin, Dr. Eric Jensen, Ms. Loree Skelton, Judge Charles Price, Ms. Taylor Hatchett, Mr. James Harwell, Dr. Jerzy P. Szaflarski, Mr. Bryan Taylor and Special Agent Dion Robinson.

Chairman Stokes recognized Attorney General Steve Marshall's new appointee to the Commission, Mr. Taylor.

Chairman Stokes presented the minutes from the November 18, 2021, commission meeting. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Vaughn, seconded by Dr. Jensen, and received unanimous approval by the Commission.

Chairman Stokes then moved into the committee reports portion of the meeting by calling on Dr. Saliski to provide an update for the Physicians' Committee. Dr. Saliski reviewed results from the Alabama Medical Association survey that addressed physician certification interest and patient interest in medical cannabis use. Preliminary results indicated that 33 percent of physicians intended to seek certification, 35 percent of physicians had over 20 patients who inquired about medical cannabis, and 70 percent of physicians have received requests from patients for medical cannabis certification.

Mr. Matt Hart from the Board of Medical Examiners (BME) updated the Commission on the BME draft rules for physicians that include provisions on the registration and training requirements for physicians to certify or recommend patients for the use of medical cannabis. Mr. Hart explained that the rules were posted and available for public comment until January 4, 2022. He explained that the BME staff is currently reviewing and analyzing the comments that were received.

Mr. Vaughn, chair of the Agricultural Committee, and Dr. Jensen, chair of the Processors Committee, did not have any new information to report.

Dr. Sam Blakemore, of the Dispensaries Committee, introduced Dr. Suzanne Respass (Vice President of Governmental Relations at Children's of Alabama) and Dr. William Rushton (Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine at University of Alabama Birmingham and Medical Director of the Alabama Poison Information Center).

Dr. Respass began by giving a historical introduction of the Alabama Poison Information Center and turned the presentation over to Dr. Rushton. During his presentation, Dr. Rushton reviewed

case and call volume statistics, community engagement and data collection tools provided by the Poison Information Center. He also discussed the Center's experience with THC products, their 24/7 medical/pharmaceutical staff and their unique ability to serve both the public and health care professionals. Dr. Respass and Dr. Rushton concluded their report by taking questions from the Commission.

Chairman Stokes then recognized Special Agent Senior Dion Robinson to give a report on behalf of the Law Enforcement and Legal Committee. Mr. Robinson discussed the requirements and costs associated with state and federal background checks. He emphasized the need to obtain an originating agency identification (ORI) number with the Federal Bureau of Investigation to aid in the turnaround time associated with background checks. He also informed the Commission of developments for statewide law enforcement officer training courses and standards. And finally, he discussed the database interfacing that is required between both the seed-to-sale tracking system and the patient/caregiver database with law enforcement officers.

Mr. Gamble provided a financial update on behalf of the Budget Committee. All members were provided a copy of current and future expenditures.

With subcommittee reports complete, the Commission moved into staff reports. Director John McMillan updated members of the efforts to secure supplemental funding and an annual appropriation by the legislature.

Upon the completion of Mr. McMillan's report, he recognized Mr. Daniel Autrey to give a legal and legislative update. Mr. Autrey began by thanking members for their contributions to the Legislative Annual Report that was submitted to the Legislature and Governor by January 1, 2022. Mr. Autrey also provided an update on the development of administrative rules and regulations, he stated that Mr. William Webster, legal counsel for the Commission, will provide a detailed outline at the upcoming March meeting. And to conclude his report, Mr. Autrey reminded members of their upcoming Senate confirmations.

Ms. Brittany Peters was then recognized to report on communication and technology. Ms. Peters explained that the Commission is required to obtain both a patient/caregiver registry and a seed-to-sale tracking system. She emphasized the complexity of these systems and acknowledged that the staff will be working closely with the Alabama Office of Information Technology to draft the functional and technical requirements for the systems.

With the conclusion of staff reports, Chairman Stokes moved to the decision item of electing a secretary. He enlightened the Commission that a secretary is needed for record keeping purposes as well as signing off on future meeting minutes following the Commission's approval. A motion to nominate Judge Price as secretary was made by Mr. Vaughn, seconded by Ms. Skelton, and unanimously approved by the Commission.

With there being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Judge Price, seconded by Ms. Skelton, and unanimously approved by the Commission. The meeting adjourned at 1:43 P.M.