

Alabama Medical Cannabis Commission Meeting

Minutes

April 14, 2022

The Alabama Medical Cannabis Commission met on April 14, 2022, in the RSA Dexter Conference Room. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Steven Stokes at 1:00 P.M.

Mr. James Harwell 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. Eric Jensen, Ms. Loree Skelton, Judge Charles Price, Ms. Taylor Hatchett, Mr. James Harwell, Dr. Jerzy P. Szaflarski, and Special Agent Dion Robinson. Members absent from the meeting were Dr. Angela Martin.

Chairman Stokes presented the minutes from the March 10, 2022, commission meeting. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Vaughn, seconded by Ms. Hatchett, and received unanimous approval by the Commission.

Chairman Stokes then moved into the committee reports portion of the meeting by recognizing Dr. Blakemore to introduce Mr. Rob Breeckner and Mr. Gregory Mcilvaine of the Ohio Medical Marijuana Control Program. Mr. Breeckner reviewed Ohio's regulatory structure, license types, their certification process, and lessons learned. Mr. Mcilvaine discussed the emergence of Delta-8 and other novel cannabinoids and how the Ohio program has adapted and responded. Mr. Breeckner and Mr. Mcilvaine concluded their report by taking questions from the Commission.

Daniel Autrey then introduced Ms. Gillian Schauer, Executive Director of the Cannabis Regulators Association (CANNRA), and Mr. Mcilvaine to provide a federal policy update on matters concerning the cannabis industry. Ms. Schauer began by sharing the origins of CANNRA and explained the growth of state participation in the organization. Mr. Mcilvaine, co-chair of the CANNRA Federal Policy Committee, reviewed content and status of federal bills that have implications for cannabis related research, banking, and legalization.

Chairman Stokes then recognized Dr. Saliski to give a report on behalf of the Physicians Committee. Dr. Saliski addressed concerns surrounding the recommendation of medical cannabis to patients who are or may become pregnant. He noted the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners rule, *Limitations Upon Registered Certifying Physicians (540-X-25.09)*, strictly prohibits a physician from certifying or recommending the use of medical cannabis to any patient who is pregnant, breastfeeding, or attempting to conceive.

Mr. Vaughn, chair of the Agricultural Committee, introduced Mr. Patrick Moody (Deputy Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries) to provide an update on rules and regulations concerning cultivation of medical cannabis. Mr. Moody noted that the Department is working closely with Commission staff to promulgate rules to ensure that cultivation rules are cohesive and follow a similar timeline as the Commission's rules.

Dr. Blakemore, of the Dispensaries Committee, provided a report on conversations he initiated with the Nevada Cannabis Compliance Board, Louisiana Board of Pharmacy and the Marijuana Policy Project. Dr. Blakemore discussed security requirements provided by the Nevada program, and also highlighted the law and dosing parameters imposed by the Louisiana Board of Pharmacy. He pointed to research articles of interest and discussed continuing education seminars in which he presented. To conclude his report, he discussed conversations with the Marijuana Policy Project concerning social equity.

Chairman Stokes then recognized Special Agent Senior Dion Robinson to give a report on behalf of the Law Enforcement and Legal Committee. Mr. Robinson noted that he and colleagues at the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency are working closely with the Commission to ensure that rules and regulations prevent diversion of future medical cannabis and medical cannabis products.

Mr. Gamble provided a financial update on behalf of the Budget Committee. All members were provided a copy of current and future expenditures. Mr. Gamble also noted that the Commission's budget requests for both the fiscal year 2022 supplemental appropriation and the fiscal year 2023 annual appropriation had been approved by the Alabama Legislature and signed by Governor Kay Ivey.

With subcommittee reports complete, the Commission moved into staff reports. Director John McMillan graciously thanked members of the Alabama Legislature and executive branch for approving the budget requests. He also addressed several mischaracterizations by a few groups and individuals. Mr. McMillan concluded his report by encouraging the public to visit the Commission website and review the Act.

Mr. McMillan recognized Mr. Autrey to give a legal and legislative update. Mr. Autrey began by reviewing the projected timeline for finalizing the rules and regulations. He then introduced Mr. Will Webster, the Commission's legal counsel, to provide an update on the development of administrative rules. Mr. Webster provided the Commission members with a schedule for upcoming workshops to discuss the draft rules. Mr. Webster emphasized the importance of the members participation and welcomed their comments and questions.

Ms. Brittany Peters was then recognized to report on communication and technology. Ms. Peters provided an update on the statewide seed-to-sale tracking system request for proposal that was issued on March 25, 2022, and noted the next steps in the process. In closing, she reviewed results from the patient interest survey on the Commission website. With 355 respondents, the survey provided feedback concerning program interest and basic demographic information of potential patients.

With the conclusion of staff reports and no decision items before the Commission, Chairman Stokes moved to discuss new business. He reminded Commission members to complete their Statements of Economic Interest, required by the Alabama Ethics Commission, by April 30, 2022.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Dr. Jensen, seconded by Mr. Gamble, and unanimously approved by the Commission. The meeting adjourned at 2:05 P.M.