

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

GOVERNOR PHIL MURPHY

## MURPHY ADMINISTRATION DOUBLES PATIENTS SERVED BY MEDICAL MARIJUANA TO 34,000

*From the New Jersey Department of Health:**Adds 300 Doctors, Cuts Wait Time for Patient ID Cards in Half*

**TRENTON** - Continuing to expand patient access and reform New Jersey's Medicinal Marijuana Program, the Murphy Administration has seen the number of patients in the program double from roughly 17,000 to 34,000 since the day Governor Murphy took office in January. The program has also added 300 doctors and reduced wait times for ID cards. Dispensaries are also now able to post prices, so patients can comparison shop.

A series of other reforms have reduced by half the amount of time it takes patients to get ID cards to an average of two weeks; allowed caregivers for terminally ill patients to get provisional eligibility cards while they await background checks; and streamlined internal processes for new patient applications so patients are not losing a month of physician certification.

"New Jersey's program has made incredible strides in expanding access and becoming a compassionate, consumer-friendly service for patients by adding physicians and new medical conditions and seeking applications for another six dispensaries," **Gov. Phil Murphy said.**

"The addition of five new medical conditions—anxiety, migraines, two forms of chronic pain and Tourette's Syndrome—has been the primary driver in the growth of the program," **said Health Commissioner Dr. Shereef Elnahal.** "We've also added 300 physicians to the program—for a total of 800—including 200 who joined since I began a series of Grand Rounds lectures in hospitals and medical schools to educate the medical community about medical marijuana's benefits. Physicians should consider marijuana as another appropriate treatment for patients with many medical conditions, especially diseases for which conventional therapies aren't working for their patients."

In addition to the 34,000 patients, there are 1,345 caregivers and 800 physicians currently participating in the program, and six Alternative Treatment Centers (ATCs) are operating in Montclair, Woodbridge, Cranbury, Bellmawr, Egg Harbor Township and Secaucus. Of the 17,000 patients who have signed up since January, a majority have one of the five new medical conditions added at the end of March.

In addition, fees have been reduced, mobile access has been added to the patient portal, ATCs can open satellite locations and participating physicians are no longer required to have their names published on the Department of Health's website. In August, the Department received 146 applications from 103 organizations in response to its request to add up to six additional ATCs — two each in the northern, central and southern part of the state. Each application is 300 pages and the Department is currently assessing how long it will take to complete the review process and announce the six successful applicants.

"Over the past three months alone, the program has added 9,000 patients," **Dr. Elnahal said.**

Dr. Elnahal has given seven Grand Round lectures to 2,000 physicians and other clinicians at Hackensack University Medical Center, St. Joseph's University Medical Center in Paterson, Cooper Medical School of Rowan University, Rutgers New Jersey Medical School in Newark, Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, Virtua Health and Hunterdon Medical Center. On Thursday, Oct. 25, Commissioner Elnahal will address physicians at AtlantiCare.

The Department is also exploring the addition of opioid use disorder as a distinct qualifying condition—in concert with Medication Assisted Treatment—to the list of conditions that would allow patients to participate in the program. Opioids are on track to cause 3,000 deaths in New Jersey this year, and about 3.2 million opioid prescriptions were written between Jan. 1 and Sept. 27. Studies have demonstrated a strong correlation between the availability of medical marijuana and a reduction in opioid prescriptions. Currently, opioid use disorder must be associated with chronic pain related to musculoskeletal disorders in order to be a qualifying condition.

For more information, visit the Department's Medicinal Marijuana webpage ([https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A\\_\\_t.e2ma.net\\_click\\_3vf2z\\_nrddit\\_nbta2f&d=DwMFaQ&c=4BTEw-1msHjOY4lTcFLmDM6JB8x6ZgbU2J24IH0HZLU&r=xF3DPDNEH8rwpTwktOjb4MHQ0EgF6v3M0zt3hszQvyU&m=2GFSnUYjn8L2dDQTinARczv5WbUD3whg8jSHTOJ689Q&s=vDPQ35E-rKJUMWW77HBkJk&e=](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__t.e2ma.net_click_3vf2z_nrddit_nbta2f&d=DwMFaQ&c=4BTEw-1msHjOY4lTcFLmDM6JB8x6ZgbU2J24IH0HZLU&r=xF3DPDNEH8rwpTwktOjb4MHQ0EgF6v3M0zt3hszQvyU&m=2GFSnUYjn8L2dDQTinARczv5WbUD3whg8jSHTOJ689Q&s=vDPQ35E-rKJUMWW77HBkJk&e=))

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