

## State of New Jersey

### Governor Phil Murphy

# Murphy Administration Adds 25,500 Patients, 400 Doctors to Medicinal Marijuana Program

03/14/2019

**TRENTON** - Governor Phil Murphy today announced that New Jersey's Medicinal Marijuana Program (MMP) has reached another milestone, adding 25,500 new patients, nearly 1,000 caregivers and 412 doctors since Governor Murphy took office.

A total of 42,528 patients, 1,736 caregivers and 925 doctors are now participating in the program. In the past 13 months, an additional 412 physicians have been added to the MMP, a 40 percent increase. The growing number of physicians participating in the program is attributable to a series of ten Grand Rounds lectures (<https://www.state.nj.us/health/medicalmarijuana/index.shtml>) that Dr. Shereef Elnahal, Commissioner of Health, has given to 3,000 doctors and other health professionals to discuss the MMP. Those lectures have focused on evidence that supports marijuana as an appropriate treatment for patients with certain debilitating conditions.

"I am proud that New Jersey now has a medical marijuana program that is compassionate and is meeting the needs of more and more patients," **said Governor Murphy**. "Today, thousands of residents living with anxiety, migraines, Tourette's Syndrome, and chronic pain, among other conditions, have increased access to medical marijuana when just one year ago many could not get the treatment they needed."

The top five medical conditions among patients who have qualified for the program are: Chronic pain due to musculoskeletal disorders (25.4%), anxiety (20.2%) intractable skeletal spasticity (19.9%), PTSD (8.8%), and severe or chronic pain due to cancer or HIV (6.85%).

"In recognition of the 3,000 New Jersey lives lost to the opioid epidemic in 2018, we have added opioid use disorder as a condition for which patients can get treatment with medical marijuana," **said Commissioner Elnahal**. "Importantly, we are also taking steps to ensure that these patients will be on Medication Assisted Treatment for their addiction, in addition to marijuana."

Previously, only individuals with opioid use disorder related to chronic pain qualified for the program.

Other reforms made in the past 13 months include:

- **Alternative Treatment Centers:**
  - Six businesses were selected to apply for permits to open new medical marijuana dispensaries (December 2018)
- **Mobile Access:**
  - Patients, caregivers & physicians can access registries, upload documents & make payments on Smart phones & tablets (April 2018)
- **Physician Friendly:**
  - Doctors no longer required to be listed on public website (optional)
- **Expanding Product:**
  - Oil – oils that contain extracted THC and CBD that can be vaporized
  - Pre-filled vape cartridges authorized (September 2018)

"It's great to see the medical marijuana industry performing like this," **said Senator Joe Vitale**. "As the sponsor of legislation to further expand and improve the medical marijuana program, I knew that once we were able to effectively open the industry up we would be able to provide much needed access to a safe and effective drug used

to treat thousands of people suffering from a variety of illnesses while at the same time, create, sustain and grow jobs throughout the state."

"Marijuana prohibition failed," **said Senator Nick Scutari**. "It is good to see marijuana can clearly flourish, when brought above ground to be controlled, regulated and taxed in plain view of the public. Not only are patients around the state benefiting from marijuana's medical uses, particularly when used as a substitute to opioids, it can also be a thriving local industry that provides jobs and opportunities for countless New Jerseyans. It's one of those few win-win programs."

Search the hashtag #MedMarijuanaTalk on social media or visit the Department of Health's Medicinal Marijuana webpage (<https://nj.gov/health/medicalmarijuana/index.shtml>) to learn more

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