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For Patients: Frequently Asked Questions about Iowa's Medical Cannabidiol Program

- **How do I become a medical cannabidiol patient in Iowa?**
 - For information on becoming a medical cannabidiol patient in Iowa, please visit our website at: <https://idph.iowa.gov/cbd/For-Patients-and-Caregivers>, or <https://idph.iowa.gov/cbd/Patient-Registration>.
- **How long does it take to approve my application?**
 - For expedited review and approval, patients and caregivers should use our online process. If submitting by paper, it may take up to two weeks to receive an update on your application.
- **What if I'm unable to visit a dispensary myself (disability, lack of transportation)?**
 - Patients who are minors, disabled, or generally unable to visit a dispensary should have a designated primary caregiver. This is someone who is able to purchase medical cannabidiol products on a patient's behalf. Primary caregivers must be designated by the patient's physician. For more information on the caregiver process, please visit: <https://idph.iowa.gov/cbd/Caregiver-Registration>.
- **What products are available for purchase at Iowa's licensed dispensaries?**
 - Currently, products available in Iowa can be found at our licensed manufacturer's website, at: <https://www.medpharmiaowa.com/aliviar>.
- **Are there FDA-Approved medical cannabis or CBD products?**
 - Yes, the only CBD product that the FDA has approved for human consumption is [Epidiolex](#). Any other CBD products marketed for human consumption are illegal to sell under federal law.
- **How much do products cost?**
 - For information on the cost of products, patients should contact our licensed manufacturer, MedPharm Iowa, at (515)-410-9100 or info@medpharmiaowa.com.
- **Does insurance cover medical cannabidiol? Can I be reimbursed?**
 - Medical cannabidiol products are not eligible for repayment through insurance or traditional reimbursement programs at this time. Patients and caregivers should expect to pay cash for their medical cannabidiol products, although some dispensaries may allow debit or credit card payments.
- **How do I know how much to take? Who determines dosage?**
 - While physicians are encouraged to maintain a dialogue with their patients about how they respond to medical cannabidiol, certifying physicians do not provide dosing recommendations. Dosing recommendations will occur at dispensaries, and will be based upon recommendations from the manufacturers, review of the literature, and information gathered from the patient at the dispensary.



- **What if I'm taking other medications, including opioids?**
 - Patients may refer to [the patient information sheet](#) for known contraindications and drug interactions with medical cannabidiol, as well as discuss this with their physician. Information about the use of medical cannabis and opioids together can be found in the resources listed below:
 - Abrams, D. I., Couey, P., Shade, S. B., Kelly, M. E., & Benowitz, N. L. (2011, November 2). CannabinoidOpioid Interaction in Chronic Pain. *Clinical Pharmacology & Therapeutics*.
 - Bushlin, I., Rozenfeld, R., & Devi, L. A. (2010). Cannabinoid-opioid interactions during neuropathic pain and analgesia. *Current Opinion in Pharmacology*, 10, 80-86.
 - Cichewicz, D. L. (2004). Synergistic interactions between cannabinoid and opioid analgesics. *Life Sciences*, 74, 1317-1324.

- **Are there any repercussions from my employer if I am a medical cannabidiol patient?**
 - Patients and prospective patients should review their employee handbook for policies related to THC or marijuana use to be sure that the use of cannabidiol products at work or outside of work is not prohibited by the employer. Patients using medical cannabidiol products may test positive for marijuana or THC presence in the event of a urinalysis or other test for the presence of drugs.

- **Are there restrictions around medical cannabidiol and firearms?**
 - When purchasing a firearm or applying for a permit to carry a concealed firearm, the purchaser or applicant it is required to disclose their use of marijuana and controlled substances. Even though it is legal for a patient to purchase and possess medical cannabidiol products in Iowa, these products are not legal at the federal level. Patients who own firearms or concealed carry permits should be aware of this disclosure if they plan to apply for a medical cannabidiol card, and should consult their attorney on the matter. For more information, patients may refer to [this letter written by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives](#) in relation to marijuana. Additionally, patients and prospective patients may contact the Iowa Department of Public safety at (515)-725-6230.

- **What are the differences between hemp-derived or OTC-CBD products and medical cannabidiol products I purchase at Iowa's licensed dispensaries? Are hemp-derived or OTC-CBD products legal?**
 - OTC-CBD products which are purchased outside Iowa's five licensed dispensaries have not been FDA-approved, or gone through the same scrutiny of testing for contamination and potency. The retail sale and manufacturing of hemp-derived CBD products is still governed by federal law. While the FDA has approved some hemp-derived food ingredients for human and animal consumption, it has not approved CBD. The FDA has also declared that CBD is not a dietary supplement. State law cannot preempt the federal law, and Iowans engaging in the manufacture, sale, or purchase of hemp-derived products should carefully consider the legality of their actions under Iowa and federal law.

- **Can I use my registration card in other states with medical marijuana programs? Does my card permit me to bring products from other states back to Iowa?**
 - Each state has their own laws on this topic. Before traveling with medical cannabidiol products, patients should contact the agency charged with regulating medical cannabis in the state(s) to which they are traveling. A valid medical cannabidiol registration card issued under the laws of another state that allows an out-of-state patient to possess or use medical cannabidiol in that state shall have the same effect as a valid Iowa medical cannabidiol registration card, as long as the products meet the strict requirements of Iowa's medical cannabidiol program. Out-of-state patients are not able to purchase products at Iowa dispensaries.



rev.05.2019

- **What if I encounter law enforcement? How do I prove that the products are mine?**
 - Patients and primary caregivers should carry their medical cannabidiol card with them at all times when in possession of medical cannabidiol products. Products purchased at Iowa's five licensed dispensaries will have a label affixed to them at the point of sale. This label will contain the patient's number, which is also on the patient or primary caregiver's medical cannabidiol registration card.

- **Can I have my products with me if I'm in assisted living or long-term care?**
 - Patients in assisted living, long-term care, or those who are inpatients at a healthcare facility should be aware that those facilities receive federal funding and grants. As such, storing or administering medical cannabidiol products within those facilities could be problematic. Patients in these facilities should consult facility staff prior to storing or administering medical cannabidiol.

- **How do I renew my registration card? How will I be notified that my card is expired?**
 - A patient's medical cannabidiol registration card expires one year from the time it is issued by the DOT. Patients will be notified by letter or email 60 days prior to their card expiring. Each year, a patient must have their condition recertified by their physician, submit the same forms to the Department of Public Health, and provide payment.