



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

May 20, 2015

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Medical Marijuana is Topic of June 9 Workshop

Public invited to review draft ordinance, share feedback

San Rafael, CA – Although medical marijuana dispensaries remain illegal in the unincorporated parts of Marin County, the Marin County Board of Supervisors is hosting a public workshop during its June 9 meeting to review a [draft ordinance](#) that would allow dispensaries to conduct business in selected unincorporated areas.

In 2013, the Marin County Civil Grand Jury recommended that the Board of Supervisors develop a viable set of ordinances for medical marijuana dispensaries in the unincorporated areas of the county. An appointed subcommittee comprised of Supervisors Damon Connolly (1st District) and Judy Arnold (5th District) has researched regulatory models that permit the sale of medical marijuana from a storefront to patients with a physician's approval or recommendation, providing a safe, convenient access point for medical marijuana to patients in need.

There are no legally operating dispensaries anywhere in Marin. Although it remains illegal under federal law, marijuana has accepted medical applications according to the California Medical Association, and California physicians routinely authorize it to treat medical ailments. California's Compassionate Use Act of 1996 allows patients and caregivers to form cooperatives or collectives. It is up to municipal governments to decide whether those entities are allowed to do business as a storefront operation.

"What we have discovered is that in the absence of licensed dispensaries, patients have to deal with delivery services or travel out of county to a dispensary," Supervisor Arnold said. "We don't know anything about these delivery services; they are unlicensed and unregulated. We don't know the quality of consultation they provide and we don't know the quality of the product the patients are getting. I think our seriously ill patients deserve better."

Under the draft proposal, no more than three special licenses would be granted within the unincorporated areas of the county, with a maximum of one license in each of three geographic zones (North Highway 101

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Corridor, South Highway 101 Corridor, and Central/West Marin). Dispensaries would be restricted to commercially zoned properties that are more than 600 feet from a school or park and have to meet strict standards for operation and security.

“It is our goal to center our attention on the operator, best practices and a medical model where the dispensaries are truly patient-focused,” Supervisor Connolly said. “The criteria we have developed around the operation of the dispensary and location focuses on safety to the community and safety to the patient.”

The public workshop will be at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 9, in the Board of Supervisors Chambers, Suite 330, Marin County Civic Center, 3501 Civic Center Drive in San Rafael. The workshop format provides a chance for public input on the draft ordinance. A copy of the draft ordinance, along with draft maps showing areas that could be eligible, is available from www.marincounty.org/main/marijuana-dispensary-ordinance.

The June 9 agenda item is informational and a forum to accept public feedback. The Board of Supervisors will not be voting on the matter that day but might decide later to schedule a first reading and subsequent merit hearing of the ordinance.

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