

5 Things to Know About the DC Medical Cannabis Program

Washington, DC legalized medical cannabis in 2010, and as of March 1, 2017 there are 4,993 patients registered in the city. The city continues to make improvements to the program, which make it an attractive market for cannabis entrepreneurs. Here are 5 things to know about DC's Medical Cannabis Program:

- 1. DC is Accepting Letters of Intent for Dispensary Applications Until April 7, 2017:** There are currently 5 licensed dispensaries in Washington, DC. Recently, the DC Department of Health announced that as a result of recent action by the DC City Council an application process for a sixth dispensary may be forthcoming for a dispensary in Ward 7 or 8. This is due to the fact that even though 25% of all medical marijuana qualifying patients in Washington, DC reside in those Wards of the city, there are currently not any nearby medical cannabis dispensaries for those residents. Any business that seeks to apply for a license must submit a letter of intent by 12pm EST April 7, 2017, however submitting a letter of intent does not bind you to submitting a license application. More info can be found [here](#).
- 2. DC Covers a Wide Range of Medical Conditions Under its Medical Cannabis Program.** DC is among a small number of jurisdictions in the U.S. permitting medical cannabis to be recommended for any condition or ailment a physician deems fit. This is a critical factor for any type of medical cannabis business as the number of qualifying conditions, directly impacts the patient population, which ultimately drives the overall market need in a jurisdiction.
- 3. DC Now Allows for Reciprocity for Out-of-State Patients.** In December 2016, the DC City Council passed an ordinance which would allow patients with a valid medical cannabis card from another state to access medical cannabis in DC. Under the same law, DC also increased the purchase limits for patients from two ounces to four ounces within a 30-day window. These changes are good news for dispensary owners as well as growers, as it will likely result in an uptick in medical cannabis purchases in the city.
- 4. DC Will Need an Electronic Sales Tracking System.** As part of allowing reciprocity for out-of-state patients, the city is required to implement an electronic tracking system to track in real-time, the amount of medical cannabis that DC residents and patients from other states purchase. It must also track all transactions made by dispensaries, cultivation centers, and testing laboratories. Companies providing these types of technologies should begin talking with city officials about their service offerings before a request for proposals is issued.
- 5. DC Law Now Requires Testing of Medical Cannabis Before Distribution.** Independent laboratories must now test all medical cannabis before distribution. These labs will be registered by the DC Department of Health. This is a new opportunity for scientifically minded entrepreneurs who have the expertise to create a reputable cannabis testing business.