

Medical Marijuana Program Timeline — Updated

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Issue

This report summarizes significant steps in the implementation of Connecticut's medical marijuana program and legislative changes since the program was enacted. The report updates OLR Report [2016-R-0097](#).

The program is administered by the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP). The program is available to patients with certain debilitating medical conditions. Patients must register with DCP and meet other requirements.

The legislature enacted the program in 2012 through [PA 12-55](#). It required DCP to adopt implementing regulations; DCP did so in 2013. A few Public Acts have amended the program since then, most notably [PA 16-23](#).

According to DCP, as of January 14, 2018, there were 22,913 registered patients.

Table 1 below shows a timeline of the program's implementation and legislative changes since enactment. More information on the program is available on DCP's [website](#).

**Table 1: Connecticut Medical Marijuana Program,
Overview of Implementation and Changes Since Enactment**

<i>Month / Year</i>	<i>Event</i>
May 2012	<p>Legislation establishes the program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The legislature enacts Connecticut's medical marijuana program through PA 12-55. Provisions allowing patient use took effect October 1, 2012; certain provisions took effect upon passage. • The act allows physicians to certify adult patients' use of marijuana for certain debilitating medical conditions. • Among various other things, the act: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ requires patients and their primary caregivers to register with DCP; ○ creates licensing requirements for producers to grow marijuana and for pharmacists (dispensaries) to dispense it; ○ provides legal protections, subject to certain exceptions and conditions, for patients, their caregivers or physicians, dispensaries, and producers for specified actions relating to palliative marijuana use; and ○ requires the DCP commissioner to establish a board of physicians who are knowledgeable about palliative marijuana use. • Many provisions require implementing regulations.
October 2012	DCP begins issuing temporary registration certificates before regulations take effect
August 2013	<p>Implementing regulations adopted, taking effect in September 2013</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCP issued a draft of proposed regulations in early 2013; the Regulation Review Committee approved regulations in August (Conn. Agency Regs., §§ 21a-408-1 to 21a-408-70) • The regulations address several topics, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ physician recordkeeping and reporting requirements; ○ the process for adding to the list of qualifying debilitating conditions; ○ the selection process for dispensary facilities and producers; ○ licensing procedures, fees, and disciplinary action; ○ marketing and advertising restrictions; ○ laboratory testing; ○ packaging and labeling; and ○ security requirements for dispensary facilities and producers.
September 2013	DCP issues Requests for Application (RFA) for dispensary and producer licenses
January 2014	DCP approves four applicants for producer licenses
April 2014	DCP approves six applicants for dispensary facility licenses
September 2014	Dispensary facilities begin sales to patients
November 2014	Board of Physicians holds its first public hearing on petitions to add to list of qualifying conditions
June 2015	<p>Legislation eliminates separate palliative marijuana administration account</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior law credited all fees DCP collected under its regulation of medical marijuana to this account. PA 15-244 (§§ 99-102 & 221) eliminated the account and requires the fees to be credited to the General Fund.
June 2015	DCP issues an RFA for additional dispensary facilities

Table 1 (continued)

Month / Year	Event
January 2016	DCP approves three additional applicants for dispensary facility licenses
February 2016	<p>Regulations adopted adding to list of qualifying debilitating conditions, taking effect in March 2016 (Conn. Agencies Regs., § 21a-408-12a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2015, the DCP commissioner announced that the department would draft regulations adding seven conditions to the list of qualifying conditions: six recommended by the board of physicians and a seventh (Fabry disease) that received a tie vote by the board. • The Regulation Review Committee approved the regulations, except for Fabry disease. Thus, the regulations added the following six conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ sickle cell disease; ○ post laminectomy syndrome with chronic radiculopathy (recurring back pain after surgery); ○ severe psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis; ○ amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease); ○ ulcerative colitis; and ○ complex regional pain syndrome.
May 2016	<p>Legislation expands the program to minors and makes several other changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The legislature enacts PA 16-23, effective October 1, 2016. • Among various other things, the act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ allows minors to be qualifying patients, subject to certain additional requirements and limitations beyond those that apply for adults; ○ adds to the list of qualifying debilitating conditions for adults; ○ requires patients to select a dispensary from which they will purchase marijuana; ○ specifically allows nurses to administer marijuana in licensed health care facilities; and ○ allows the DCP commissioner to approve medical marijuana research programs. • Another 2016 act (PA 16-39) allows advanced practice registered nurses, rather than just physicians, to certify patients for medical marijuana use for qualifying debilitating conditions, except for glaucoma (§§ 47-51, effective January 1, 2017).
December 2016	<p>DCP approves state's first medical marijuana research program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program will compare the effectiveness of medical marijuana versus oxycodone in treating pain in patients with multiple rib fractures.

Table 1 (continued)

Month / Year	Event
February through August 2017	<p>DCP commissioner proposes additions to the list of qualifying debilitating conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In February, June, and August, the commissioner proposed adding a total of seven conditions to the list of qualifying medical conditions for the program, following public hearings and the board’s recommendations. • The recommended additions are as follows (the August recommendations updated those from June); the conditions will qualify only for adults except as noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ spasticity or neuropathic pain associated with fibromyalgia, ○ severe rheumatoid arthritis, ○ post herpetic neuralgia, ○ muscular dystrophy (adults and minors), ○ hydrocephalus with intractable headache, ○ intractable headache syndromes, and ○ neuropathic facial pain. • The regulations implementing the recommendations have not yet been adopted.
January 2018	DCP issues an RFA for additional dispensary facilities

Sources: DCP [website](#) and [news releases](#); news reports; Connecticut General Assembly website.

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