

## HB 5313: An Act Concerning Revisions to the Medical Cannabis Statutes

Senator Maroney, Representative D'Agostino and members of the General Law Committee, thank you for listening to our testimonies today regarding HB 5313. My name is Brian Essenter. I am a pharmacist and have been a dispensary manager at multiple dispensaries in CT. I have been working in Connecticut's Medical Marijuana Program for 6 years now. I am also a patient of the CT MMP. I am very proud of our program and the improvements we have made over the years. I am always happy to support improvements to our medical marijuana program. Today I would like to testify IN FAVOR of HB 5313 WITH CHANGES.

1. Sec. 1. (b)(2) "... to purchase such palliative marijuana from a dispensary that has more than one location, provided every dispensary at which the purchase is made has real-time integration with the electronic prescription drug monitoring program..."
  - a. My concern is that this would pertain ONLY to dispensaries that have more than one location!
    - i. Companies that have more than 1 dispensary are all owned by "Multi-State Operators" (MSO's). The majority of which are headquartered outside of Connecticut. That means that the profits of these companies go right out of state.
    - ii. This will push patients to certain dispensaries over others. This seems to violate anti-trust laws and would create more of a monopoly that the industry already has. This is not in line with any equity I am aware of and seems discriminates against small CT owned businesses.
  - b. Why not allow patients to transfer at will between "... ANY dispensary at which the purchase is made has real-time integration with the electronic prescription drug monitoring program ..."?
    - i. If we change the allotment date to the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month and the dispensaries are submitting "real-time" there should be no reason the dispensary could not be responsible for the patient not going over their allotment. No different than a patient pharmacy shopping with a prescription for a controlled substance.
    - ii. We could require ALL dispensaries to upload "real-time" to EPDMP
  - c. Logistical Issues:
    - i. We would have to change every patient's allotment date to the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month ending on the last day of the month. Otherwise, it would be impossible to know how much of their allotment a patient has left.
    - ii. The software that is currently used does not share patient files between dispensaries at multiple locations. Meaning that every time a patient went to a different dispensary, they would have to be

- registered into their system again and their allotment re-set date confirmed with the other dispensary.
- iii. What if a dispensary has multiple locations, but not all locations are capable of “real-time” integration with EPDMP? Are those patients restricted?
  - iv. Patients who hear that they can just go to a different dispensary only to find out that even that is limited will be very upset.
2. Sec. 5. “No Producer... or any agent of such producer, shall give to a dispensary...or any employee of such dispensary anything of value, including, but not limited to, a gift or reward, unless authorized by law.”
- a. There is not a definition of what this refers to. Are we speaking about “Swag/giveaways” such as hats, t-shirts, pens, or are we talking about discounts on medication? “Swag” items have been very commonplace in the industry. These items are sent from the producers to the dispensaries and passed along to the patients at no cost.
  - b. This is one of the only ways that the producers can promote their brands. This is not something that any dispensary receives any benefit from. In fact, if anything, it is more work to sort and give out the merchandise. We are happy to do it and the patients really appreciate it.

If anyone would like to follow up, please feel free to contact me:

Brian Essenter RPh  
Medical Marijuana Counselor / Pharmacist  
MM Consult CT  
[www.mmconsultct.com](http://www.mmconsultct.com)  
203-383-0864  
b.essenter@gmail.com