

Medical Cannabis Policy Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 21, 2:00 pm-5:00 pm

This meeting was held in person and virtually.

This meeting was recorded. An audio copy of this recording can be found on the Utah Public Notice Website (<https://www.utah.gov/pmnl/>).

Visit the board's website for more information on past meeting minutes and agendas (<https://medicalcannabis.utah.gov/>).

Attendees

Board members attending: Kent Andersen, Nanette Berezhnyy, Cami Clark, CMHC, Desiree Hennessy, Melissa Hinton, JD Lauritzen, Blake Smith, and Misty Smith, PhD.

Board members excused: Anthony Griffiths

DHHS/UDAF staff attending: Richard Oborn, Shannon Thoman-Black, Trevor Eckhoff, Jada Stelmach, Dr. Brandon Forsyth, and Cody James

Agenda

1. Welcome

Ms. Hennessy acknowledged that there was a quorum so the meeting could proceed at approximately 2:00 pm and read the introduction script.

2. Board approval of March 2026 minutes

Ms. Hennessy asked the board if there were any proposed changes to the March 17, 2026 minutes. There were no changes proposed. Ms. Berezhnyy motioned to approve the March 2026 minutes and Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The board voted unanimously to approve the March 2026 minutes.

3. Board administrative business

The board welcomed a new board member, Melissa Hinton, DNP, representing recommending medical providers.

4. DHHS and UDAF update

- a. DHHS updates: Mr. Oborn informed the board about:
 - i. The University of Utah Center for Medical Cannabis Research Symposium.
 - ii. Dr. Matt McIlff presenting at the Ogden Surgical Medical Society Conference.
 - iii. Current program statistics.
- b. UDAF updates: Dr. Forsyth informed the board about:
 - i. A study of vapes found in schools and its preliminary data.
 - ii. Pending date for inventory control system (ICS) launch has been moved to August 2026.
 - iii. The new Specialized Product Authority Licensing Board position applications are expected to be posted soon in order for the board to meet the June or July transition.

5. Previous Board Recommendations

The board reviewed the impact of several legislative bills and the upcoming transition of Center of Medical Cannabis to UDAF effective July 1, 2026.

- HB 389 Medical Cannabis Amendments
- SB 66 Medical Cannabis Pharmacy Amendments
- HB 281 Workers' Compensation Cannabis Amendments
- SB 121 Medical Cannabis Program Amendments

The board reviewed the status of 22 previous recommendations:

- Legislative Success: 7 recommendations were added to bills and passed; 2 were added to bills that failed; 13 were not included in legislation.
- Qualifying Conditions: The board discussed how the Specialized Product Authority Licensing Board will recommend adding new qualifying conditions. Members agreed to monitor the new application process before taking further action.
- Employment Protections: Discussion regarding extending public sector employee protections to the private sector. The board emphasized the need to be progressive regardless of immediate legislative appetite.
- Telehealth: Strong support was expressed for allowing telehealth for renewals to reduce patient costs and travel burdens.

6. Advisory Board mission statement

The board discussed establishing strategic goals for the remainder of 2026. The discussion included:

- Cost and access
- Increasing patient count
- Education
- Research integration
- Legislative strategy

The board agreed to return at the next meeting to discuss its goals further.

The board discussed refining its core identity to be more concise and professional. Vote: Approve the following Mission, Vision, and Purpose statements:

- **Purpose:** The Medical Cannabis Policy Advisory Board brings together patients, medical providers, industry operators, researchers, regulators, and public representatives to advise on Utah's medical cannabis laws, rules, and licensing. Established by the Utah Legislature in 2023, the board serves as a public forum where stakeholders collaborate and offer recommendations grounded in each member's area of expertise.
- **Mission:** To provide balanced recommendations to state lawmakers and agencies that improve the Utah medical cannabis program for patients.
- **Vision:** A medical cannabis program where Utah patients can reliably access safe, high-quality medicine as part of their standardized healthcare informed by evidence-based research and real world experience.
 - Motioned: Mr. Andersen
 - 2nd: Ms. Hinton
 - Roll call vote:
 - Kent Andersen: Yes
 - Nanette Berezhnyy: Yes
 - Cami Clark: Yes
 - Anthony Griffiths: Absent
 - Desiree Hennessy: Yes
 - JD Lauritzen: Yes
 - Blake Smith: Yes
 - Misty Smith: Yes
 - Melissa Hinton: Yes

7. Advisory board goals, cont.

The board streamlined its strategic goals into four primary "lenses" used to evaluate every agenda item:

1. Access: Identifying gaps and proposing solutions for patient entry and affordability.
2. Education: Addressing knowledge gaps for providers, patients, and the public.
3. Research: Supporting connecting pathways for clinical and translational data.
4. Standardization: Treating cannabis with parity to other legal medical interventions.
 - Motioned: Mr. Smith
 - 2nd: Ms. Hinton
 - Roll call vote:
 - Kent Andersen: Yes
 - Nanette Berezhnyy: Yes
 - Cami Clark: Yes
 - Anthony Griffiths: Absent
 - Desiree Hennessy: Yes
 - JD Lauritzen: Yes
 - Blake Smith: Yes
 - Misty Smith: Yes
 - Melissa Hinton: Yes

8. Advisory board committees

The board moved to reorganize its committee structure to streamline meetings and produce more substantive recommendations.

Vote: Amend the MCPAB bylaws to remove Section 4 of Article 3 and adopt the following four standing committees:

1. Patient Access Committee
2. Policy/Rules Committee
3. Industry Committee
4. Research and Education Committee

The board discussed a "reporting up" structure where chairs from specialized committees bring findings to the Policy committee to ensure statutory accuracy.

- Motioned: Mr. Lauritzen

- 2nd: Ms. Hinton
- Roll call vote:
 - Kent Andersen: Yes
 - Nanette Bereznyy: Yes
 - Cami Clark: Yes
 - Anthony Griffiths: Absent
 - Desiree Hennessy: Yes
 - JD Lauritzen: Yes
 - Blake Smith: Yes
 - Misty Smith: Yes
 - Melissa Hinton: Yes

9. Next meeting's agenda

The board discussed finalizing committee assignments based on member interest and expertise.

10. Adjourn

Mr. Smith motioned to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Bereznyy seconded the motion. The board voted unanimously to end the meeting, and the meeting ended at approximately 4:30 pm.