Medical Cannabis Policy Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 15, 2:00 pm-5:00 pm

This meeting was held in person and virtually and was recorded. An audio copy of this recording can be found on the Utah Center for Medical Cannabis YouTube page: https://www.youtube.com/@UtahMedicalCannabis

Visit the board's website for more information on past meeting minutes and agendas (https://medicalcannabis.utah.gov/medical-cannabis-policy-advisory-board/).

Attendees

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

Absent: Anthony Griffiths

UDAF staff attending: Cody James, Brandon Forsyth, Desiree Hennessy, Veronica Goedhart, Trevor Eckhoff, Sara Lealos, Brenda Holt, and Jeremiah Sniffin

1. **Welcome**

Ms. Berezhnyy acknowledged that there was a quorum so the meeting could proceed at approximately 2:03 pm and read the introduction script.

2. **Approval of August 2026 minutes**

Ms. Berezhnyy asked the board if there were any proposed changes to the August 21, 2026 minutes. There were no changes proposed. Mr. Smith motioned to approve the August 2026 minutes and Dr. Smith seconded the motion. The board voted unanimously to approve the August 2026 minutes.

3. **Administrative business**

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For administrative business Ms. Berezhnyy mentioned that this was Mr. Eckhoff's last month as a designated staff support member for the board. They thanked him for his service. Ms. Berezhnyy then mentioned that there is a medical cannabis legislative working group meeting on October 19, 2026. Ms. Berezhnyy mentioned that she has been selected for the vacant position on the board of an individual representing an organization that advocates for medical cannabis patients. This means that the position of a member of the general public with a medical cannabis patient card is open. Applications for that position are open until August 25, 2026.

4. **UDAF updates**

Dr. Forsyth had no updates. Mr. James updated the board on pharmacy applications, compliance checks, the specialized products authority licensing board reviews, and administrative rules. In response to questions regarding the 17th medical cannabis license and pharmacy independence, staff noted applicant restrictions and confirmed a public hearing will take place.

5. **Compassionate Use Board updates**

Sara Lealos presented on the Compassionate Use Board (CUB), with Brenda Holt also available to answer questions. In response to questions about petitions not going through, Ms. Lealos noted that non-responsive RMPs and missing documentation are common issues, confirming that petitions must originate with an RMP and that it is rare for an applicant's primary physician to also serve as their RMP. Board members and CUB representatives discussed physician comfort levels, patient access, and the lack of medical cannabis education in traditional medical curricula and accreditation bodies. Additional topics covered included the CUB's composition, the petition evaluation process compared to other medical procedures, and the role of the Special Product Authority Licensing Board (SPALB) in handling appeals. Public comments were provided by Cassandra Finch of Ripple Effects Wellness, Sarah Stevens a member of the general public, Mr. Eckhoff as a member of the general public, and Tanisha a member of the general public, leading to further discussion on CUB application experiences, patient education resources, condition-specific checklists, dosages, and statutory requirements regarding conventional treatments.

6. **Committee updates** –

The board provided updates from its committees.:

- Patient Access Committee:

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    - Ms. Clark and Dr. Hinton gave an update. The update was about the committee receiving a record of complaints about the program and survey data. Ms. Clark brought up the RMP response rate and how to overcome that.
- Industry Committee:
    - Mr. Smith gave an update about industry reporting and top priorities and having good participation. They are preparing a policy presentation and industry priorities in the October MCPAB meeting.
- Research & Education Committee:
    - The committee has not met this month. They plan on looking into RMP education and any road blocks.
- Policy & Rules Committee:
    - The committee did not meet because there were not enough members.
        - Mr. Smith commented about the urgency to fill the committee because there are industry policy recommendations coming.
        - Mr. Smith made a comment about getting interest from members of the general public participating in a subcommittee.

7. Medical cannabis card default length

Ms. Berezhnyy opened the topic for discussion regarding a proposal to extend the medical cannabis card default length from two to five years. Mr. Smith shared several thoughts on card durations, including leaving lengths to recommending providers, extending them for intractable or incurable conditions, and differentiating between adult and minor patients, while Ms. Clark emphasized that PTSD should also be an exception. Additional comments and questions were raised by Mr. Smith, Mr. Henderson, and Mr. Lauritzen regarding the review process, default card lengths, safety guardrails, and whether changes require rule or statutory updates—with Mr. Lauritzen clarifying that a statutory change is necessary. Further discussion touched on existing guardrails and concerns about "click and prescribe" operations versus required in-person visits, as noted by Dr. Hinton and Ms. Berezhnyy. Public comments were provided by Rob Morris of Beehive Pharmacy and Cassandra Finch of Ripple Effects Wellness concerning controlled substance regulations and card lengths. Director Hennessy and Ms. Berezhnyy addressed scenarios involving patient status changes and card cancellations, and the item concluded with Mr. Lauritzen explaining the governance process in response to Mr. Smith's question about moving the topic to the policy board.

8. Next meeting's agenda

APPROVED

a. The industry committee may bring a policy presentation.
b. Mr. Smith asked a clarifying question and the urgency of the MCPAB making policy changes to the legislature.

9. Adjourn

Dr. Smith motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:03 pm.

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