THE CANNABIS CONNECTION

Your information link to Missouri's Division of Cannabis Regulation

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & SENIOR SERVICES
Division of Cannabis Regulation

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CONTENTS

CANNRA Participation

How DCR utilizes CANNRA - Interview with Amy Moore

Author: Tara McKinney
Public Outreach Director

Amy Moore served as an interim Member at Large to the Cannabis Regulators Association (CANNRA) Board and was elected for a full term in June 2024. CANNRA is a nonpartisan association of government agencies involved in cannabis and cannabinoid regulation. Their mission is to "convene, educate, and support governmental jurisdictions responsible for implementing cannabis and cannabinoid policies and regulations." CANNRA accomplishes this by, "fostering collaboration and coordination to identify and share best practices that safeguard public health and consumer safety, promote equity, and create regulatory certainty for industry participants."

We sat down with Amy to talk about how CANNRA impacts the Missouri cannabis program, her personal experience with becoming a board member and the latest CANNRA conference.

"What does being a board member of CANNRA entail? Can you tell us a little bit about the process of becoming a member?"

Amy:
Per CANNRA's constitution and bylaws, board members have to be elected by the Association's voting members, which are all representatives of the primary agency in each member state that regulates cannabis of some kind (i.e., medical, adult use, hemp, etc.). There are seven positions, and nominations come from voting members. Once you are nominated, you submit a statement to the voting members on why you want to be on the board with your bio and background. The members vote and once elected, you serve a year term.

Board members meet regularly. Gillian Schauer is the executive director, and she runs the organization and provides representation at federal hearings and at conferences. The board assists her with conducting the business of the association, drafts and reviews statements, creates fact sheets and other materials, etc.

You really encourage division staff to be part of CANNRA. Please describe the benefits of DCR staff being involved in CANNRA?

Amy: When we were a very small program, one of the most valuable things that we could do was to talk to other state regulators and tap into their expertise. Once you know that expertise is available, it is a huge resource. The issues and challenges that we face right now are complex and developing quickly. It really takes everyone we have in the division to accomplish our responsibilities, and that includes being out there learning what we need to learn at all levels. We want Missouri to be a leader in cannabis regulation, but even if we just want to be better, the most efficient way is to connect with our counterparts in other states as much as possible. You will get many different experiences and opinions, but it's still information! We are the only ones in Missouri doing this work. In government, there are usually other agencies doing similar things, but with cannabis regulation there is not. CANNRA has information we need and it's just waiting for us to absorb it!

You and several DCR staff attended a CANNRA conference in June 2024. Can you give us a brief overview of the conference?

Amy: CANNRA holds two conferences per year. In December, the conference is for regulators and regulatory staff, and the June conference is for external stakeholders, regulators, staff and a wide range of ancillary groups (IT, finance, policy, federal agencies, etc.). We discuss emerging issues and all of the things that are most interesting to regulators at any given time. This June, Andrea Balkenbush (Deputy Division Director), Sarah Burch (Bureau of Business Licensing Services) and I attended the conference in Minnesota. The agenda this year had some big issues to discuss, such as cannabis rescheduling, potential Farm Bill changes, program developments and challenges, data use and availability, work safety and protection, improving product safety, and more. I participated on a panel and moderated a session as well this year.

"I am really excited about where this association is going and how much it is respected. I appreciate the CANNRA board's willingness to keep the organization moving forward and the executive director's expertise. I have learned a lot from all of them."
- Amy Moore

To learn more about CANNRA you can visit: https://www.cann-ra.org/

Cannabis Research

Research License Update

Author: Jason Brooks, Policy Research & Development Supervisor
Program Development Unit

Article XIV gave DCR the authority to "provide for the issuance of additional types or classes of licenses to operate marijuana-related businesses that are intended to facilitate scientific research or education." With the addition of new team members in DCR, we are ready to move forward with this new license type.

Over the course of February and March, DCR held meetings with researchers and regulators in other states to gain perspective on their development process, licensing process, rule creation and obstacles faced for both regulators and prospective licensees.

On April 16, 2024, DCR held a listening session with universities, labs, researchers and industry representatives. This listening session allowed attendees to provide testimonials on the significance of cannabis research in Missouri, challenges for conducting cannabis research, considerations for research versus educational licensing and creating rules and regulations.

On May 8-9, 2024, DCR team members attended the Cannabis Science Convention in Kansas City, Mo. This provided the opportunity to understand the global state of current cannabis research, gaps where research opportunities exist and understanding of how research can improve consumer education.

As we move forward, DCR will look to hold an additional listening session in the coming months to gather more information on these topics.

DCR will continue to monitor the request to reschedule marijuana to a Schedule lll substance. Rescheduling could cause new considerations for rule development, licensing, entry barriers to research, patient dosage and administering, packaging, etc.

In the summer of 2024, DCR tentatively plans to begin drafting rules for research licensing with the intent to provide for public comment and put final rules into effect by the winter of 2024. Once final rules are in place, applications for research licensing can begin.

Join our email list to stay up to date on the latest research license information.

Ask the Compliance Officer

What is a common deficiency that you see and what do you recommend to help minimize those instances?

Heather Bilyeu, Compliance Officer

Mandatory Testing

There appears to be confusion among licensees on the requirements of 19 CSR 100-1.110(7)(E) and the association to the packaging requirement in 19 CSR 100-1.120(1)(C)1.C.

19 CSR 100-1.110(7)(E) is a mandatory testing requirement to ensure the concentration of cannabinoids are consistent throughout the marijuana product lot and is used to determine if marijuana product passes or fails mandatory testing. This is not associated with 19 CSR 100-1.120(1)(C)1.C, which requires licensees to list the number of milligrams of THC in the package, directly under the diamond for infused products. DCR allows for a reasonable deviation between the approximate amount of THC listed on the package under the universal symbol and the mandatory testing result. A reasonable deviation would include an amount of less than 10% percent above or below the mandatory testing results. The exact amount is to be listed on the "testing" label.

Robin Redmon, Compliance Officer

Virtual Transfer vs Package Adjustments

Maintaining accurate inventory records is important to compliant operations, and when errors or discrepancies occur, it is just as important to understand how to address them. The risk of these errors and discrepancies increases during the transfer of product to and from a facility. To prevent errors, the sending licensee must verify the product leaving the facility is accurate and manifested correctly via the statewide track and trace system (Metrc). The physical package and virtual package are required to be the same items departing. The receiving licensee must then check product into the inventory. The receiving licensee should verify physically and virtually the product being accepted from the sending licensee matches both physically and virtually. This must be verified by physically inspecting the product package for item name, weight or count, etc., prior to the licensee accepting the manifest.

If there is an inaccuracy in weight or count, item, etc., the receiving licensee must reject the package both virtually and physically, returning said product to the sending licensee. If the receiving facility accidentally accepts the product on the manifest, the licensee is to quarantine the package and reach out to Metrc to start the virtual transfer process.

It is a misconception by some licensees that a package adjustment is allowable in lieu of a virtual transfer. Yes, Metrc will allow you to make package adjustments; however, this is not a compliant practice. The sending and receiving licensee shall never use a package adjustment to fix said issue. This will not be an accurate account of inventory and is breaking the seed-to-sale tracking requirement.

If a licensee determines that a mistake has been made the product must be quarantined until the licensee is able to work through the virtual transfer process with the assigned compliance officer. Once all information is gathered, the compliance officer will work with the licensees and Metrc to resolve the issue both virtually and physically.

Ask the Compliance Officer, continued

Tramondre Hamilton, Compliance Officer

Inventory Control
One of the most common deficiencies seen from licensees are issues with inventory control. Ensuring that product is labeled properly and accurately within the statewide track-and-trace system (Metrc) is key to proper inventory control and compliance with regulatory requirements. According to 19 CSR 100-1.130(1)(E), "All marijuana product in a medical or marijuana facility must be traceable in the state-wide track and trace system at all times." The licensee must ensure that daily inventory is verified and accurate at the beginning and end of each day and that Metrc is reflective of the physical inventory.

Licensees are required to make sure all marijuana products have the associated Metrc package tags attached to all boxes and containers, so marijuana products are easily identifiable. All inventory discrepancies and errors must be documented, reported and investigated by licensee management.

Due to the importance of inventory control, the designated inventory manager must be knowledgeable of the seed-to-sale tracking system and trained properly on the implementation of inventory control systems.

Communication between licensees and their compliance officers is key. Compliance officers are available for any questions or concerns about inventory compliance. As a reminder, licensees are required notify DCR of inventory issues such as discrepancies and errors. Our goal is to ensure accuracy and consistency in the statewide tracking of marijuana product from seed to sale.

The information provided in this article is a high-level overview of these topics. DCR recommends that licensees contact their compliance officer for questions that are specific to their facilities.

Do you have a question that you would like to see featured in The Cannabis Connection? Email us at DCRC@health.mo.gov!

Patient ID Cards

Author: Alexis Collins and Roxanne Struemph
Patient and Application Services, Individual Licensing Unit

Patients who wish to apply for a medical marijuana ID card can do so with an easy three-step process. Applicants will need to be prepared to (1) meet with a certifying Physician/Nurse Practitioner, (2) register for an online registry portal account, and (3) submit a completed application with all applicable fees.

Applying for a medical marijuana patient ID

Schedule an appointment with a Physician/Nurse Practitioner who is in good standing in the state of Missouri.

- The Physician/Nurse Practitioner will verify the qualifying medical condition of the patient, and complete and submit an Electronic Physician Certification Form (EPCF) on behalf of the patient.
- Once submitted, EPCFs are valid for 30 days from the Physician/Nurse Practitioner's signature date.
- Patient will attach the EPCF within the application through the online registry portal.

Register for an account with the online registry portal found at mo-public.mycomplia.com.

- In the upper right-hand corner, select "Register."
- Fill out the registration form with the patient's complete name, date of birth, social security number, email, password and the application type of "Patient/Caregiver/Physician."
- Upon registering, applicants will receive an email with log-in instructions.

Log-in to the online registry portal and submit a completed application.

- On the left-hand side of the screen, below the patient's name, select "+Create New Application" to begin the application.
- A new window will open with a drop-down menu that says, "I am a*." Select "Patient" and from the boxes that appear, select "New Patient," then "Create Application." This will start the New Patient Application.
- All information must be filled out within the application and navigating to a new page can be done by selecting "save and next."
  - Answer all applicable questions.
  - Include the patient's complete name, email, phone number, and residential and mailing address.
  - The applicant's date of birth and social security number are prepopulated and cannot be changed.
  - Attach the previously submitted EPCF from the Physician Page by selecting "View Available Certifications."
  - Attach a digital photo of the patient, as well as a photo of the patient's government-issued ID.
  - Sign and submit the application with all applicable fees.

Once the department receives a complete application, the application will be processed within 30 days of its submission. Applicants should monitor the email address used to log in to their online registry portal account for communication from the department as the application is processed.

For more resources and tools on how to apply, qualifying patient rules, and frequently asked questions, visit our website at Cannabis.Mo.Gov. The Individual Licensing Unit (ILU) serves as DCR's frontline team responsible for processing individual card holder applications, including patient applications. The ILU team is available for specific application questions and can be reached by email at cannabisinfo@health.mo.gov or by phone Monday-Thursday from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. CST at 866-219-0165 (toll-free).

Meet our team
We are DCR

Lindsey Rutz
Manager, Program Development Unit

I am a Jefferson City, Mo., native with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Public Relations and Advertising. I've been interested in the cannabis industry and cannabis regulation since 2007, choosing to write most college arguments on the topic by researching novel legalization and regulatory efforts across the country.

After college, I began my professional career in Denver, Colo., as a content associate with Zomato, and then as an operations coordinator, shipping and receiving manager and administrator in the cannabis industry. I wore many hats and gained hands-on experience in all cannabis business activities, such as cultivation and propagation, extraction, isolation, potency testing, formulation, production, packaging and brand promotion. To date, I have nearly a decade of direct cannabis industry experience in both the public and private sector.

I have served under DCR's Section for Compliance and Enforcement in a variety of roles over the last 4 years. Those roles include compliance officer, regional compliance manager, senior research and data analyst and program development unit manager.

Don Kinkhorst
Manager, Bureau of Facility Compliance

I grew up in western Colorado, southwest Idaho and north central Missouri. I studied geology, finance and business management, graduating with a Bachelor of Science in geology in 2002.

Upon graduation, I began my career with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR). During that time, I performed environmental compliance inspections, investigations, audits, emergency response, homeland security, grant management, program development, personnel supervision and training of internal and external partners. I then served as a senior residential mortgage loan officer with a private lender for about 3 years. In this position, I worked with active-duty military and veterans helping them to achieve their goals of home ownership.

In September 2023, I joined the Division of Cannabis Regulation where I have served as a business licensing supervisor. In this role, I worked overseeing licensing specialists and their audits of Missouri's cannabis licensees. In June of this year, I accepted the Bureau of Facility Compliance manager position. I am looking forward to my new position. I am very thankful to be a part of this new and evolving program and great team of people. I look forward to being part of the continued development of this division!

Meet our team, continued

Jennifer Nelp
Executive Assistant, Division Director's Office

I'm what they call in our division a "retro employee" (in more ways than one). When Article XIV passed in November 2018, I worked in the Director's Office for the Department of Health and Senior Services in the Office of Minority Health. The day following the passage forever changed my life. I was tasked in helping answer the calls and taking down emails to put them on the list to get updated information as it came out. It was literally all I did for over a month until they could start hiring for the newly developed medical marijuana section. It's an understatement to say a lot of people were excited.

Then, in June of 2019, I decided to slide over to the section officially, because I heard they wanted awesome people to join their team. I believe it was my 80s bangs that got me the job as a lead administrative assistant. In May of 2020, I was promoted to executive assistant. It's amazing to know how we started and where we are right now going from a section to our own Division of Cannabis Regulation. It's totally bodacious!

Missouri Cannabis Regulation Collaborative

Author: Tara McKinney, Public Outreach Director

The application period for the new Missouri Cannabis Regulation Collaborative (MCRC) closed on June 18. The Division of Cannabis Regulation is excited to form the collaborative and give licensees the opportunity that they have been asking for. The MCRC will be made up of a maximum of 30 licensees. DCR wants to ensure a diverse workgroup comprised of many different business structures, including small and large facilities, multiple license holders, standalone operators, individuals with a variety of backgrounds and expertise, etc. The collaborative will have representation from all license types and regions across the state.

This collaborative will be a working group for licensees and regulators to strengthen relationships, discuss challenges, problem solve, and share information and knowledge to pursue our mutual goal of a safe and successful cannabis program. The emphasis of the collaborative will be to work on big picture topics surrounding the cannabis industry, such as drug rescheduling impacts, statewide and programmatic planning, market conditions, Farm Bill revisions, and more.

The application review process will take place during July and a welcome meeting will be held in August.

This project will be a key addition to our already existing efforts.

COMING SOON

Licensee Workshops

Author: Tara McKinney, Public Outreach Director

The DCR held three workshops this past June in St. Louis, Jefferson City and Lee's Summit. The workshops included information about business licensing, compliance, investigations, and packaging and labeling. This was the first time DCR has offered this type of workshop for licenses.

"The licensee workshops were a great opportunity for our licensees to connect with our staff. We are excited to have our first series in the books! We received a lot of positive feedback from licensees in attendance and hope to continue to provide useful tools and resources to licensees in our next series," said Brittany Kirkweg, deputy director, Section for Compliance and Enforcement.

There were approximately 154 attendees over the three days. A survey was provided to all attendees and DCR staff will utilize those results for future planning.

Thank you to all the licensees who attended!

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Tell us something good!
Amy and Andrea love to hear from licensees. Is your business doing something innovative, interesting or new that you would like to share with them?

Email Tara McKinney, Public Outreach Director at tara.mckinney@health.mo.gov and we may contact you for an in-person meeting to hear more about it!

FIND OUR TEAM'S ORGANIZATIONAL CHART AT Cannabis.Mo.Gov