

**Cannabis Control Authority  
Board of Directors Meeting  
MINUTES**

**January 29, 2025**

**1:00-3:00 PM**

**9954 Mayland Drive, Deep Run III  
Conference Room A (1<sup>st</sup> Floor)  
Henrico, VA 23233**

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Keohane, Chair  
Neil Amin, Vice Chair  
Michael J. Massie  
Roxann Robinson  
Anthony Williams

LEGAL COUNSEL: Josh Laws, Office of the Attorney General

PRESENTERS: Jessica Seier, Cannabis Control Authority  
Hanna Jones, Cannabis Control Authority  
Jake Shuford, Cannabis Control Authority  
Jamie Patten, Cannabis Control Authority

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Keohane called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM.

**2. DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

Mr. Keohane determined the Board had a quorum given that all board members were present.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Upon motion by Mr. Amin and duly seconded by Ms. Robinson, the members voted to approve the meeting's agenda.

**4. APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING'S MINUTES**

Upon motion by Mr. Williams and duly seconded by Ms. Robinson, the members voted to approve the draft minutes from the December 9, 2024, Board meeting.

5. **RECAP OF THE INITIAL SAFE DRIVING CAMPAIGN**

Ms. Seier presented a recap of the CCA's initial Safe Driving Campaign. She reported on the campaign's radio and TV public service announcements (PSAs) that ran September 2023 - September 2024 and the digital advertising campaign that ran February 2024 -September 2024. The digital marketing campaign appeared on Meta (Facebook and Instagram), streaming video, digital-out-of-home (e.g., billboards, gas station screens), and YouTube. Ms. Seier noted that the visibility of the campaign exceeded the CCA's expectations with over 147 million impressions. She stated the campaign's radio and television public service announcements and digital advertisements, which cost \$469,000, generated a total media value of over \$3.4 million.

Ms. Seier also spoke about the CCA's plans for the next Safe Driving Campaign. She shared that the CCA is nearing completion of a new Request for Funding Proposal to select a vendor who will work with the CCA on the next campaign. Once the CCA selects a vendor, pursuant to the RFP, it will use the results from the 2024 Impaired Driving Survey to inform messaging for the new campaign. The CCA's goal is to launch the new campaign by the end of 2025.

6. **MEDICAL CANNABIS PRACTITIONER SURVEY**

Ms. Jones presented on the Medical Cannabis Program (MCP) Practitioner Survey currently under development. The survey will aim to assess practitioners' experiences in certifying patients, beliefs and attitudes regarding the MCP, and perspectives on ways to improve the program. She noted the CCA initiated the launch of the MCP Practitioner Survey based on a recommendation from the recently completed MCP Patient Survey.

Ms. Jones reported the survey will be conducted using Qualtrics and will include approximately 30 questions about a practitioner's patient certification process, satisfaction with the MCP program, and overall experience participating in the program. Registered practitioners in the BioTrack system, which currently number more than 1,300, will receive the voluntary survey. Survey data collection will run for 30 days and will be anonymous; there will be no monetary compensation for participation in the survey. The CCA aims for a minimum of 299 unique responses from practitioners. Ms. Jones estimated the CCA would make the survey available in mid-February start date with the goal of completing analysis of the results by May 2025.

7. **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Mr. Shuford updated the Board on cannabis-related legislation introduced during the 2025 legislative session. He first reviewed legislation in the House and Senate that would establish an adult-use market; he noted the measures are essentially the same

as legislation the General Assembly adopted and Governor Youngkin subsequently vetoed last year. He also reviewed legislation, HB1989, that would modify the Medical Cannabis Program. The legislation includes three main components: the creation of product designations for edible, inhalable, and topical cannabis products; updated labeling requirements for new product types; and allowing the delivery of cannabis products to any business or residence, including temporary residence.

Mr. Shuford next explained two bills addressing hemp and seven bills related to youth possession of inhalable products. He also discussed several additional pieces of legislation on workplace impairment, cannabis odor (stop and search) as well as bills that would modify sentences for cannabis-related offenses and establish an intergovernmental work group to address the proliferation of illicit cannabis.

#### **8. UPDATE TO PROPOSED REGULATORY CHANGES**

Mr. Shuford provided an update on the CCA's proposed regulatory changes. He noted that the required public comment period had ended and CCA staff had collected all public comments and distributed them to the Board for their consideration. Based on public comments received, CCA staff recommended four technical, non-substantive updates aimed at clarifying regulations. Mr. Shuford also stated that CCA staff recommended the board reject proposals by stakeholders to remove from the proposed regulatory changes: certain product information on labels; the prohibition on the use of fruit imagery; and the restriction limiting the delivery of medical cannabis products to residential addresses. He also told the Board that CCA staff recommended the adoption of a universal symbol to be prominently displayed on all cannabis products.

He concluded his presentation by outlining the next steps in the process for finalizing the proposed changes, including a Board vote on adopting the final regulations, the filing of the final regulations, and the publication of the final regulations. Ms. Casey added that while the regulations will be effective February 10, 2025, there will be a delayed enforcement schedule for some of the changes to provide adequate time for pharmaceutical processors to adjust to the new requirements. Mr. Keohane requested a motion to approve the final regulations as presented. Upon motion by Mr. Williams and duly seconded by Mr. Massie, the regulations were approved as presented.

#### **9. BUDGET UPDATE**

Ms. Patten reported on CCA budget figures ending December 31, 2024. She noted that the CCA is halfway through the fiscal year. Ms. Patten pointed out the CCA made two, big procurements over the past six months -- the seed-to-sale system, and a licensing system from Virginia Interactive (also known as Tyler Virginia) that will replace the

current BioTrack system.

#### **10. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Mr. Keohane opened the public comment period.

Ms. Heather Whitlock shared concern about the lack of educational requirements for healthcare providers prior to being allowed to certify patients as eligible for medical cannabis. She stated the lack of education puts patients at risk. She recommended the CCA prioritize establishing standards for providers to ensure the program maintains professionalism, integrity, and a focus on patient-centered care. She also commented on the “sustainability” of Virginia’s Medical Cannabis Program, stating that it is vital to distinguish the medical program from recreational use.

Dr. Benjamin Sypniewski, a pharmacist, asked the Board to protect pharmacists and pharmacy technicians' interest in assisting Virginians in accessing cannabis. He also spoke on the dangers of illicit cannabis and the harm it can cause because it is unregulated.

Written comments received in advance of the Board meeting are attached as Appendix A.

#### **11. ADJOURNMENT**

The Board adjourned at 2:06 PM.

## Appendix A

Email received from Deborah Nguyen, PharmD, RPh on 1/28/2025 at 3:06 PM.  
Subject: Regulatory Action

As you are aware, the current structure in Virginia's medical cannabis program requires physicians to prescribe cannabis, with dispensary staff, particularly pharmacists, playing a key role in dispensing and advising patients on the appropriate products. However, this process leaves a significant gap in care, as doctors simply refer patients to us to help them with their cannabis product needs, without the ability for pharmacists to issue prescriptions or medical certifications. I believe there is a clear opportunity to expand the role of pharmacists in Virginia's medical cannabis program. Pharmacists are highly trained healthcare professionals, with expertise in medication therapy management, patient counseling, and product suitability. In fact, many pharmacists are increasingly specializing in cannabis therapeutics, which positions us to provide high-quality guidance and direction to patients in selecting the most appropriate cannabis products for their medical needs.

I believe that if we were granted the ability to prescribe cannabis and provide medical certifications in-store or through telehealth, we could enhance the quality of care and convenience for patients. This would also reduce the burden on physicians, making the process more efficient for patients in need of cannabis-based treatments.

By empowering pharmacists to take on this additional role, we can further support patient care, ensuring that individuals receive the proper guidance and access to the right products to manage their health conditions effectively.

I respectfully urge the Virginia Cannabis Control Authority to consider exploring avenues to expand the role of pharmacists within the state's cannabis program. I would be happy to provide additional insights or meet to discuss this matter further. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue. I look forward to the opportunity to collaborate on this effort to enhance patient care and access to medical cannabis in Virginia.