

**Cannabis Control Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
MINUTES
November 28, 2023
1:00-3:00 PM**

**Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission
Commissioner's Conference Room (Basement)
333 E. Franklin Street / Richmond, VA 23219**

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Keohane, Chair
 Bette Brand
 Anthony Williams
 Michael J. Massey

MEMBERS ABSENT: Neil Amin, Vice Chair

LEGAL COUNSEL: James Flaherty, Office of the Attorney General

PRESENTERS: Jeremy Preiss, Cannabis Control Authority
 Mackenzie Slade, Cannabis Public Policy Consulting
 Sara Zimmer, Cannabis Public Policy Consulting
 Dr. Michael Sofis, Cannabis Public Policy Consulting
 Gideon Cunningham, Cannabis Public Policy Consulting

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Keohane called the meeting to order at 3:15 PM.

2. DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

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

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Upon motion of Ms. Brand and duly seconded by Mr. Williams, the members voted to approve the meeting's agenda.

4. APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING'S MINUTES

Upon motion by Ms. Brand and duly seconded by Mr. Williams, the members voted to approve the draft minutes from the October 25, 2023, Board meeting.

5. INTRODUCTIONS – NEW CCA STAFF

Mr. Preiss introduced one new staff member who joined the CCA after the previous board meeting:

- Wendy Hupp, Finance Director

6. STUDY OF MEDICAL CANNABIS PROGRAM

Mr. Preiss first explained the origin of the market study. Delegate Bobby Orrock, Chair of the House Health, Wealth and Institutions Committee, emailed Mr. Preiss in June 2023 requesting the CCA consider a study about the “necessity and feasibility of adding licenses to the existing medical cannabis program.” Mr. Preiss then explained that Delegate Orrock’s email included specific issues to consider in the study: the total number of patients per dispensary; the distance and time traveled by patients to access dispensaries; the cost and variety of pharmaceutical cannabis product offerings; and the inclusion of Virginia-based businesses and non-vertically integrated participants in any additional licensing. Finally, Mr. Preiss introduced Cannabis Public Policy Consulting (CPPC), which the CCA selected and partnered with to complete the study.

Ms. Slade, CPPC’s Executive Director, introduced CPPC as an independent cannabis policy, research, and consulting firm that works with government entities to examine, implement, and improve cannabis policies and programs with novel data. Ms. Slade and Ms. Zimmer, CPPC’s Senior Researcher, presented on the market study’s objectives, methodology, and results.

CPPC identified five study objectives and explained that the study involved a population survey of past-year cannabis consumers and patients, an assessment of supply based on patient experiences, and policy analysis. A key finding was the high price of medical cannabis in the state of Virginia, which is a direct result of Virginia’s unique policy framework. Ms. Slade noted that an increase in supply may help improve the regulated medical market, but only if the supply increase leads to lower medical cannabis prices. CPPC provided four potential policy pathways to improve patient access to medical cannabis with the shared objectives of increasing supply, lowering prices and shifting patient demand to regulated Pharmaceutical Processors.

The Board thanked CPPA staff for their presentation. The members of the Board present at the meeting considered whether to send a transmittal letter stating that the CPPC study is worthy of consideration by the Administration and General Assembly, and the CCA Board and staff are available to provide expert technical advice to legislators and the Administration in the event they are interested in pursuing any of the policy pathways provided in the report. Upon motion by Ms. Brand and seconded by Mr.

Keohane, the members present unanimously voted to approve the transmittal message to the General Assembly.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Mr. Keohane invited comments from the public.

Thomas Malone, Compliance Director, Pure Shenandoah, thanked the Board, the CCA and CPPC for the outstanding report. He also commented on the upcoming 2024 legislative session, the patient count estimated in the market study, and the timeline for the RFA for HSA 1.

Nicole Leja, Vice President, Quality Assurance, Curaleaf, questioned whether patients may benefit from a requirement that pharmaceutical processors engage in wholesale sales between the vertically integrated processors.

Chelsea Higgs Wise, Co-Founder and Executive Director, Marijuana Justice, thanked CPPC and the CCA staff for the incredible report. She also commented on considerations she would like to see included in conversations about an adult use retail market.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned at 4:49 PM.