



PRAIRIE RIDGE

PREVENTION SERVICES

"CLEAN MIND; CLEAN BODY; CLEAN SPIRIT; DRUG FREE"

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Newsletter

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Marijuana in Iowa: What Might Change?

By Amy Schutte Ring, Prevention Specialist

No laws have changed yet, but there is a bill, passed on May 1, 2014, by both the House and the Senate, currently on the Governor's desk. If signed, this will change portions of the marijuana laws in Iowa. The only legalized form of medical cannabis will be a nonpsychoactive oil called cannabidiol, or CBD, which is low in THC (the main psychoactive ingredient in marijuana).

This oil is said to be effective in reducing the number of seizures experienced by people with severe seizure disorders. The Iowa bill would decriminalize the possession of cannabidiol for patients and their caregivers with a neurologist's recommendation, and state-issued ID card. The eligible patients would have a diagnosis of intractable epilepsy and would only be able to access the ID card through a doctor practicing in Iowa. Producing and selling CBD, and other cannabis products, would remain illegal in Iowa; however, patients and caregivers could bring it into the state in limited amounts, up to 32 ounces, or about a six-month supply.

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A potential barrier for patients may be that 19 out of 21 states with legalization of marijuana require proof of residency, including Illinois and Colorado. Michigan does allow out-of-state customers to purchase marijuana and limits possession to up to 2.5 ounces at one time. Questions have also been raised about the potential that patients or caregivers possessing CBD oil, while traveling through other states (like Minnesota or Nebraska), may face criminal charges for possessing a product containing cannabis by local law enforcement.

Iowa lobbying groups that support the bill include Easter Seals, the Brain Injury Alliance, the Epilepsy Foundation, and the American Civil Liberties Union. The bill was also backed by groups of caregivers who were asking for access to CBD as an alternative to medications typically prescribed for seizure disorders. They reported severe side effects from these medications and noted CBD appears to have fewer side effects.

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Marijuana in Iowa: What Might Change? (cont.)

There are still several groups in Iowa who do not support the medical use of cannabis. Some of these groups include the Iowa Peace Officers Association, the Iowa Medical Society, Blank Children's Hospital, and the Iowa Osteopathic Association.

At the national level, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is still in the process of studying the effects of CBD and other forms of medical cannabis. There have not been enough clinical trials showing how the benefits of the marijuana outweigh the risks in patients. The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) website cautions the effect of decriminalization of marijuana in several states. The website specifically notes changes in perception of risk among youth, with medical marijuana legalization in 19 states, and recreational use in 2 states. The Monitoring the Future Study, conducted by the University of Michigan in 2013, showed a decrease in perception of harm among high school seniors at the same time their use rates increased.

With the passing of this bill, would all medical marijuana now be legal? No. Will this be available to anyone? No. Only with a recommendation from a neurologist in Iowa. Will it be available for purchase in Iowa? No. It cannot be produced or manufactured in the state. According to the bill, there are stipulations and procedures in place for those who would be approved to obtain it, bring it back into the state and administer it to the prescribed patient. What does this mean for the future of possible full legalization? We do not know for sure. For now, all we can do is ask questions. We can ask our insurance companies what they would approve in terms of use. We can ask our businesses what measures are or are not in place for someone who may come to work after using CBD? Are we ready for a change in culture which treats marijuana as medication? How might we address an increase in marijuana use rates in both adults and youth due to shifts in culture and perception? What other, unknown risks do we expose Iowans to by opening that door?

Would You Like to become TIPS Certified?

Prairie Ridge Addiction Treatment Services currently offers Training for Intervention ProcedureS (TIPS) alcohol seller/server classes for anyone interested in Cerro Gordo, Mitchell, Hancock, Worth, Winnebago, Floyd and Franklin Counties. Whether you work in a bar or restaurant, convenience store or grocery store, or are scheduled for a shift at the beer garden for your community festival, we have classes to help increase your knowledge about serving, not serving to minors and the liability involved. Types of classes include On Premise (5 hours), Off Premise (3 hours) and Concessions (3 hours). Upon completion of the class and passing the test, each person will be certified for three years. For more information, or to sign up for a **FREE class**, please contact Meagen Wentz at mwentz@prairieridge.net or Amy Schutte Ring at aschuttering@prairieridge.net or call 641-424-2391.

Upcoming Events

June 21st, 2014 Youth Diversion Program at Prairie Ridge, Mason City.

The program will be from 8:00-4:30 p.m. Saturday.

June 21st & 23rd, 2014 Adolescent Prime for Life at Prairie Ridge, Mason City.

The program will be from 8:00-4:30 p.m. Saturday. Monday 1:00 p.m-5:00 p.m.

For more information, please contact the Prairie Ridge Mason City Office at 641-424-2391 or TOLL FREE at 1-866-429-2391.

In the next issue...

What's new with ecigs?



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