

Utah's Medical Cannabis Program Surpasses 80,000 Cardholders

Growth in Utah's Medical Cannabis Program

Utah's medical cannabis program has experienced a significant surge, with nearly 83,500 residents holding medical marijuana cards as of March, representing a substantial 19% increase from the previous year, reports the state health department.

Revenue Reaches \$138 Million

The growth in cardholders has translated into substantial revenue for the state, with medical marijuana sales generating approximately \$138 million in revenue last year, according to Richard Oborn, director of the Center for Medical Cannabis at the state health department. This marks a notable 16% increase compared to sales in 2022.

Increased Awareness and Education

Oborn attributes the program's expansion to growing awareness and education about medical cannabis among both patients and medical providers. As more healthcare professionals become informed about its potential benefits, more patients are considering it as an alternative medication, particularly for conditions like chronic pain, PTSD, and nausea.

Top Qualifying Conditions

Persistent pain, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and nausea remain the top three qualifying conditions among medical marijuana cardholders, as revealed in a recent report.

Changes Under SB 233

Several changes to the medical marijuana program are set to take effect next month under SB 233. These include:

- Prohibiting state and local governments from discriminating against employees with medical marijuana cards, treating it similarly to other controlled substances.
- Allowing deliveries to cardholders' workplaces, except in public community spaces.
- Permitting cannabis manufacturers to advertise their products to consenting adults for the first time.

Impact of Legislative Measures

Last year, legislative measures extended the renewal period for medical marijuana cards from six months to a year, helping patients avoid lapses in their cards. Additionally, HB 230 established the University of Utah's Center for Medical Cannabis, tasked with studying the safety and effects of marijuana.

As Utah's medical cannabis program continues to evolve, these legislative changes aim to enhance access, reduce stigma, and facilitate further research into the potential benefits and risks associated with medical marijuana use.

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