

From the Mass Medical Society Website: Vital Signs

BRM Proposes Definition of Patient-Physician Relationship for Medical Marijuana Law

The Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine this week proposed a legal definition for “bona fide physician patient relationship” in the state’s new medical marijuana law.

If adopted, it could be used for the board’s disciplinary cases involving inappropriate medical marijuana certifications of patients by physicians. Under the law, patient certifications “shall be made only in the course of a bona fide physician-patient relationship.”

The Board’s proposed definition states, “Bona Fide Physician Patient Relationship means a relationship between a physician, acting in the usual course of his or her professional practice, and a patient in which the physician has completed and documented a full assessment of the patient’s medical history and current medical condition, including a physical and mental status examination, and has responsibility for the ongoing care and treatment of the patient.”

The Board’s proposal will be forwarded to the Department of Public Health, which will make the final decision on whether this definition is included in regulations for the medical marijuana law. The DPH is looking at such matters as how patients should be certified, and how dispensaries should be licensed. The DPH may or may not adopt this language in its proposed regulations.

The MMS has provided materials to the Board and the DPH to assist in developing the regulations. One threshold standard the MMS has proposed is that all physicians involved in certifying patients in Massachusetts must be fully licensed in Massachusetts. The DPH is under considerable pressure to advance its proposed regulations implementing the referendum that went into effect January 1.

MMS President Calls for More Research on Medical Marijuana

MMS President Richard V. Aghababian today called on the medical and research communities to conduct large-scale clinical trials on the efficacy and safety on the medical use of marijuana, after receiving word from the Drug Enforcement Administration that marijuana’s classification as a Schedule I drug is not necessarily an impediment to medical research.