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**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

**IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2015**

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A N A C T

RELATING TO FOOD AND DRUGS - THE EDWARD O. HAWKINS AND THOMAS C.  
SLATER MEDICAL MARIJUANA ACT

Introduced By: Senators Archambault, Miller, Satchell, Ciccone, and Goldin

Date Introduced: February 26, 2015

Referred To: Senate Health & Human Services

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Sections 21-28.6-3 and 21-28.6-3 of the General Laws in Chapter 21-28.6  
2 entitled "The Edward O. Hawkins and Thomas C. Slater Medical Marijuana Act" are hereby  
3 amended to read as follows:

4           **21-28.6-3. Definitions.** -- For the purposes of this chapter:

5           (1) "Cardholder" means a qualifying patient or a primary caregiver who has registered  
6 with the department and has been issued and possesses a valid registry identification card.

7           (2) (i) "Compassion center" means a not-for-profit corporation, subject to the provisions  
8 of chapter 6 of title 7, and registered under § 21-28.6-12, that acquires, possesses, cultivates,  
9 manufactures, delivers, transfers, transports, supplies or dispenses marijuana, and/or related  
10 supplies and educational materials, to patient cardholders and/or their registered caregiver  
11 cardholder, who have designated it as one of their primary caregivers.

12           (ii) "Compassion center cardholder" means a principal officer, board member, employee,  
13 volunteer, or agent of a compassion center who has registered with the department and has been  
14 issued and possesses a valid registry identification card.

15           (3) "Debilitating medical condition" means:

16           (i) Cancer, glaucoma, positive status for human immunodeficiency virus, acquired  
17 immune deficiency syndrome, Hepatitis C, [post-traumatic stress disorder](#), or the treatment of  
18 these conditions;

1 (ii) A chronic or debilitating disease or medical condition, or its treatment, that produces  
2 one or more of the following: cachexia or wasting syndrome; severe, debilitating, chronic pain;  
3 severe nausea; seizures, including but not limited to, those characteristic of epilepsy; or severe  
4 and persistent muscle spasms, including but not limited to, those characteristic of multiple  
5 sclerosis or Crohn's disease; or agitation of Alzheimer's Disease; or

6 (iii) In the case of a qualifying patient seeking treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder  
7 (PTSD), the patient has been diagnosed with PTSD by a licensed psychiatrist, psychologist,  
8 psychiatric and mental health clinical nurse specialist, or independently licensed master's level  
9 mental health professional has received a course of standard pharmacological and mental health  
10 treatment for PTSD with written documentation of inadequate clinical response or intolerable  
11 adverse reactions, received a comprehensive evaluation by a licensed mental health or addiction  
12 professional with a written determination that the patient does not have a current substance use  
13 disorder, and will receive follow-up monitoring and treatment by a licensed health professional in  
14 collaboration with a licensed psychiatrist psychologist, psychiatric and mental health clinical  
15 nurse specialist, or licensed master's level mental health professional at least quarterly for the first  
16 year and semi-annually thereafter to assess clinical response and adverse reactions to medical  
17 marijuana; or

18 ~~(iii)~~(iv) Any other medical condition or its treatment approved by the department, as  
19 provided for in § 21-28.6-5.

20 (4) "Department" means the Rhode Island department of health or its successor agency.

21 (5) "Marijuana" has the meaning given that term in § 21-28-1.02(26).

22 (6) "Mature marijuana plant" means a marijuana plant that has flowers or buds that are  
23 readily observable by an unaided visual examination.

24 (7) "Medical use" means the acquisition, possession, cultivation, manufacture, use,  
25 delivery, transfer, or transportation of marijuana or paraphernalia relating to the consumption of  
26 marijuana to alleviate a patient cardholder's debilitating medical condition or symptoms  
27 associated with the medical condition.

28 (8) "Practitioner" means a person who is licensed with authority to prescribe drugs  
29 pursuant to chapter 37 of title 5 or a physician licensed with authority to prescribe drugs in  
30 Massachusetts or Connecticut.

31 (9) "Primary caregiver" means either a natural person, who is at least twenty-one (21)  
32 years old, or a compassion center. A natural person primary caregiver may assist no more than  
33 five (5) qualifying patients with their medical use of marijuana.

34 (10) "Qualifying patient" means a person who has been diagnosed by a practitioner as

1 having a debilitating medical condition and is a resident of Rhode Island.

2 (11) "Registry identification card" means a document issued by the department that  
3 identifies a person as a registered qualifying patient, a registered primary caregiver, or a  
4 registered principal officer, board member, employee, volunteer, or agent of a compassion center.

5 (12) "Seedling" means a marijuana plant with no observable flowers or buds.

6 (13) "Unusable marijuana" means marijuana seeds, stalks, seedlings, and unusable roots.

7 (14) "Usable marijuana" means the dried leaves and flowers of the marijuana plant, and  
8 any mixture or preparation thereof, but does not include the seeds, stalks, and roots of the plant.

9 (15) "Written certification" means the qualifying patient's medical records, and a  
10 statement signed by a practitioner, stating that in the practitioner's professional opinion, the  
11 potential benefits of the medical use of marijuana would likely outweigh the health risks for the  
12 qualifying patient. A written certification shall be made only in the course of a bona fide,  
13 practitioner-patient relationship after the practitioner has completed a full assessment of the  
14 qualifying patient's medical history. The written certification shall specify the qualifying patient's  
15 debilitating medical condition or conditions.

16 **21-28.6-6. Administration of regulations.** -- (a) The department shall issue registry  
17 identification cards to qualifying patients who submit the following, in accordance with the  
18 department's regulations:

19 (1) Written certification as defined in § 21-28.6-3(15) of this chapter;

20 (2) Application or renewal fee;

21 (3) Name, address, and date of birth of the qualifying patient; provided, however, that if  
22 the patient is homeless, no address is required;

23 (4) Name, address, and telephone number of the qualifying patient's practitioner; and

24 (5) Name, address, and date of birth of each primary caregiver of the qualifying patient,  
25 if any.

26 (b) The department shall not issue a registry identification card to a qualifying patient  
27 under the age of eighteen (18) unless:

28 (1) The qualifying patient's practitioner has explained the potential risks and benefits of  
29 the medical use of marijuana to the qualifying patient and to a parent, guardian, or person having  
30 legal custody of the qualifying patient; and

31 (2) A parent, guardian, or person having legal custody consents in writing to:

32 (i) Allow the qualifying patient's medical use of marijuana;

33 (ii) Serve as one of the qualifying patient's primary caregivers; and

34 (iii) Control the acquisition of the marijuana, the dosage, and the frequency of the

1 medical use of marijuana by the qualifying patient.

2 (c) The department shall verify the information contained in an application or renewal  
3 submitted pursuant to this section, and shall approve or deny an application or renewal within  
4 fifteen (15) days of receiving it. The department may deny an application or renewal only if the  
5 applicant did not provide the information required pursuant to this section, or if the department  
6 determines that the information provided was falsified. Rejection of an application or renewal is  
7 considered a final department action, subject to judicial review. Jurisdiction and venue for  
8 judicial review are vested in the superior court.

9 (d) If the qualifying patient's practitioner notifies the department in a written statement  
10 that the qualifying patient is eligible for hospice care, the department shall verify the application  
11 information in accordance with subsection (c) of this section and issue a registry identification  
12 card to the qualifying patient and primary caregivers named in the patient's application within  
13 seventy-two (72) hours of receipt of the completed application. The department shall not charge a  
14 registration fee to the patient or caregivers named in the application.

15 ~~(d)~~(e) The department shall issue a registry identification card to each primary caregiver,  
16 if any, who is named in a qualifying patient's approved application, up to a maximum of two (2)  
17 primary caregivers per qualifying patient.

18 (1) The primary caregiver applicant shall apply to the bureau of criminal identification of  
19 the department of attorney general, state police, or local police department for a national criminal  
20 records check that shall include fingerprints submitted to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.  
21 Upon the discovery of any disqualifying information as defined in § 21-28.6-6(d)(4), and in  
22 accordance with the rules promulgated by the director, the bureau of criminal identification of the  
23 department of attorney general, state police, or the local police department shall inform the  
24 applicant, in writing, of the nature of the disqualifying information; and, without disclosing the  
25 nature of the disqualifying information, shall notify the department, in writing, that disqualifying  
26 information has been discovered.

27 (2) In those situations in which no disqualifying information has been found, the bureau  
28 of criminal identification of the department of attorney general, state police, or the local police  
29 shall inform the applicant and the department, in writing, of this fact.

30 (3) The department shall maintain on file evidence that a criminal records check has  
31 been initiated on all applicants seeking a primary caregiver registry identification card and the  
32 results of the checks. The primary caregiver cardholder shall not be required to apply for a  
33 national criminal records check for each patient he or she is connected to through the  
34 department's registration process, provided that he or she has applied for a national criminal

1 records check within the previous two (2) years in accordance with this chapter. The department  
2 shall not require a primary caregiver cardholder to apply for a national criminal records check  
3 more than once every two (2) years.

4 (4) Information produced by a national criminal records check pertaining to a conviction  
5 for any felony offense under chapter 28 of title 21 ("Rhode Island Controlled Substances Act"),  
6 murder, manslaughter, rape, first-degree sexual assault, second-degree sexual assault, first-degree  
7 child molestation, second-degree child molestation, kidnapping, first-degree arson, second-degree  
8 arson, mayhem, robbery, burglary, breaking and entering, assault with a dangerous weapon,  
9 assault or battery involving grave bodily injury, and/or assault with intent to commit any offense  
10 punishable as a felony or a similar offense from any other jurisdiction shall result in a letter to the  
11 applicant and the department disqualifying the applicant. If disqualifying information has been  
12 found, the department may use its discretion to issue a primary caregiver registry identification  
13 card if the applicant's connected patient is an immediate family member and the card is restricted  
14 to that patient only.

15 (5) The primary caregiver applicant shall be responsible for any expense associated with  
16 the national criminal records check.

17 (6) For purposes of this section "conviction" means, in addition to judgments of  
18 conviction entered by a court subsequent to a finding of guilty or a plea of guilty, those instances  
19 where the defendant has entered a plea of nolo contendere and has received a sentence of  
20 probation and those instances where a defendant has entered into a deferred sentence agreement  
21 with the attorney general.

22 ~~(e)~~(f) The department shall issue registry identification cards within five (5) days of  
23 approving an application or renewal that shall expire two (2) years after the date of issuance.  
24 Registry identification cards shall contain:

- 25 (1) The date of issuance and expiration date of the registry identification card;
- 26 (2) A random registry identification number;
- 27 (3) A photograph; and
- 28 (4) Any additional information as required by regulation or the department.

29 ~~(f)~~(g) Persons issued registry identification cards shall be subject to the following:

30 (1) A patient cardholder shall notify the department of any change in the patient  
31 cardholder's name, address, or primary caregiver; or if he or she ceases to have his or her  
32 debilitating medical condition, within ten (10) days of such change.

33 (2) A patient cardholder who fails to notify the department of any of these changes is  
34 responsible for a civil infraction, punishable by a fine of no more than one hundred fifty dollars

1 (\$150). If the patient cardholder has ceased to suffer from a debilitating medical condition, the  
2 card shall be deemed null and void and the person shall be liable for any other penalties that may  
3 apply to the person's nonmedical use of marijuana.

4 (3) A primary caregiver cardholder or compassion center cardholder shall notify the  
5 department of any change in his or her name or address within ten (10) days of such change. A  
6 primary caregiver cardholder or compassion center cardholder who fails to notify the department  
7 of any of these changes is responsible for a civil infraction, punishable by a fine of no more than  
8 one hundred fifty dollars (\$150).

9 (4) When a patient cardholder or primary caregiver cardholder notifies the department of  
10 any changes listed in this subsection, the department shall issue the patient cardholder and each  
11 primary caregiver cardholder a new registry identification card within ten (10) days of receiving  
12 the updated information and a ten-dollar (\$10.00) fee. When a compassion center cardholder  
13 notifies the department of any changes listed in this subsection, the department shall issue the  
14 cardholder a new registry identification card within ten (10) days of receiving the updated  
15 information and a ten-dollar (\$10.00) fee.

16 (5) When a patient cardholder changes his or her primary caregiver, the department shall  
17 notify the primary caregiver cardholder within ten (10) days. The primary caregiver cardholder's  
18 protections as provided in this chapter as to that patient shall expire ten (10) days after  
19 notification by the department. If the primary caregiver cardholder is connected to no other  
20 patient cardholders in the program, he or she must return his or her registry identification card to  
21 the department.

22 (6) If a cardholder loses his or her registry identification card, he or she shall notify the  
23 department and submit a ten dollar (\$10.00) fee within ten (10) days of losing the card. Within  
24 five (5) days, the department shall issue a new registry identification card with new random  
25 identification number.

26 (7) If a cardholder willfully violates any provision of this chapter as determined by the  
27 department, his or her registry identification card may be revoked.

28 ~~(g)~~(h) Possession of, or application for, a registry identification card shall not constitute  
29 probable cause or reasonable suspicion, nor shall it be used to support the search of the person or  
30 property of the person possessing or applying for the registry identification card, or otherwise  
31 subject the person or property of the person to inspection by any governmental agency.

32 ~~(h)~~(i) (1) Applications and supporting information submitted by qualifying patients,  
33 including information regarding their primary caregivers and practitioners, are confidential and  
34 protected under the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, and shall

1 be exempt from the provisions of chapter 2 of title 38 et seq. (Rhode Island access to public  
2 records act) and not subject to disclosure, except to authorized employees of the department as  
3 necessary to perform official duties of the department, and pursuant to subsection (i) of this  
4 section.

5 (2) The application for qualifying patient's registry identification card shall include a  
6 question asking whether the patient would like the department to notify him or her of any clinical  
7 studies about marijuana's risk or efficacy. The department shall inform those patients who answer  
8 in the affirmative of any such studies it is notified of, that will be conducted in Rhode Island. The  
9 department may also notify those patients of medical studies conducted outside of Rhode Island.

10 (3) The department shall maintain a confidential list of the persons to whom the  
11 department has issued registry identification cards. Individual names and other identifying  
12 information on the list shall be confidential, exempt from the provisions of Rhode Island access to  
13 public information, chapter 2 of title 38, and not subject to disclosure, except to authorized  
14 employees of the department as necessary to perform official duties of the department.

15 ~~(j)~~(i) Notwithstanding subsection (h) of this section, the department shall verify to law  
16 enforcement personnel whether a registry identification card is valid solely by confirming the  
17 random registry identification number or name.

18 ~~(k)~~(k) It shall be a crime, punishable by up to one hundred eighty (180) days in jail and a  
19 one thousand dollar (\$1,000) fine, for any person, including an employee or official of the  
20 department or another state agency or local government, to breach the confidentiality of  
21 information obtained pursuant to this chapter. Notwithstanding this provision, the department  
22 employees may notify law enforcement about falsified or fraudulent information submitted to the  
23 department.

24 ~~(l)~~(l) On or before January 1 of each odd numbered year, the department shall report to  
25 the house committee on health, education and welfare and to the senate committee on health and  
26 human services on the use of marijuana for symptom relief. The report shall provide:

27 (1) The number of applications for registry identification cards, the number of qualifying  
28 patients and primary caregivers approved, the nature of the debilitating medical conditions of the  
29 qualifying patients, the number of registry identification cards revoked, and the number of  
30 practitioners providing written certification for qualifying patients;

31 (2) An evaluation of the costs permitting the use of marijuana for symptom relief,  
32 including any costs to law enforcement agencies and costs of any litigation;

33 (3) Statistics regarding the number of marijuana-related prosecutions against registered  
34 patients and caregivers, and an analysis of the facts underlying those prosecutions;

1           (4) Statistics regarding the number of prosecutions against physicians for violations of  
2 this chapter; and

3           (5) Whether the United States Food and Drug Administration has altered its position  
4 regarding the use of marijuana for medical purposes or has approved alternative delivery systems  
5 for marijuana.

6           SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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LC001577/SUB A/3  
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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO FOOD AND DRUGS - THE EDWARD O. HAWKINS AND THOMAS C.  
SLATER MEDICAL MARIJUANA ACT

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1           This act would add post-traumatic stress disorder to the definition of "debilitating  
2   medical condition" for purposes of qualifying for medical marijuana. It would also accelerate the  
3   issuance of an approved medical marijuana use application if the patient is eligible for hospice  
4   care.

5           This act would take effect upon passage.

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