



How does S. 14 change Vermont's medical marijuana law?

On June 6, 2016, Gov. Peter Shumlin signed S. 14 into law, making several positive changes to Vermont's medical marijuana law. This will allow more seriously ill patients to qualify for medical cannabis, will reduce the wait others must endure before qualifying, and will help prevent children from accessing cannabis products.

S. 14 makes the following changes to current law:

1. Adds glaucoma as a qualifying condition.
2. Changes the qualifying condition "severe pain" to "chronic pain."
3. Removes "without success" from the requirement that patients have tried other treatments. This is important because, for example, opioids may successfully treat a person's pain but may not be the best option, for reasons that should now be obvious.
4. Reduces the amount of time there must be a provider-patient relationship before the provider issues a medical marijuana certification from six months to three months and creates exceptions to the three-month requirement for the following cases: (a) renewals for a patient who is already on the registry, but his or her provider retires or moves to another state, (b) a cardholding patient from another state who moves to Vermont, (c) a patient under hospice care, or (d) a patient with any cancer (was previously limited to "cancer with distant metastases").
5. Removes the requirement that caregivers must never have been convicted of a drug-related crime, instead allowing the Department of Safety to approve caregivers on a case-by-case basis regardless of their criminal history.
6. Requires labeling and child-resistant packaging for edibles sold at dispensaries.
7. Allows the transport and transfer of marijuana to research institutions.