



Office of Medical Cannabis  
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# Office of Medical Cannabis Information Bulletin # 1

**DATE:** June 30, 2015  
**TO:** All interested parties  
**FROM:** Michelle Larson, Director  
**SUBJECT:** Certification of qualifying medical conditions within group medical practices

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## [Information Bulletin #1 Summary](#)

MDH will recognize a “designated-certifier” within a group medical practice as the designated health care practitioner to certify one or more qualifying medical conditions of patients on behalf of the group.

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Providers have asked how MDH would interpret a request by a medical group practice to designate one practitioner to be the responsible practitioner to maintain continuity of care delivery for their patients who are eligible for the medical cannabis program. In response, MDH has developed the following information bulletin.

The legislature authorized the Medical Cannabis Program (Laws 2014, Chapter 311) to provide access to medical cannabis for ill patients who have at least one of the qualifying medical conditions listed in the statute. The health care providers’ certification and treatment obligations are found in Minnesota Statutes §§152.22, subd. 4, and 152.28, subd. 1, and will be interpreted consistent with common group medical practice standards and in the interest of maintaining patient continuity of care.

In Minnesota, group medical practices frequently deliver health care. In these group practices, individual health care practitioners have shared responsibilities and consolidated health records. MDH acknowledges that many patients eligible for the medical cannabis program are extremely ill and receiving medical care from such groups rather than an individual practitioner. MDH will recognize health care practitioners working in a group environment and the continuity of care that they provide patients to be consistent with the medical cannabis program, as long as the providers meet the other program requirements. The following describes how the practices could comply by designating one or more practitioners in the group to oversee the continuity of care.

For the Minnesota medical cannabis patient registry, a medical group’s “designated-certifier”<sup>1</sup> may certify a patient’s qualifying medical condition. The responsibility for the continuing care and treatment of the patient’s medical conditions remains a shared responsibility of the group practice. The designated-certifier must personally issue, sign, and place his or her license number on each individual patient-specific certificate for the qualifying conditions. The designated-certifier must also remain sufficiently engaged in the patient’s care to meet all statutory reporting requirements and act as the primary point of contact within the group for the patient registry.

A medical group that chooses to designate a certifier would apply to MDH for approval by, at a minimum:

- notifying OMC that it plans to use a “designated-certifier” to alert the department’s compliance and monitoring staff (OMC staff need to have this notice because the IT system will flag high volume certifiers as suspicious activity);
- submitting the names and license numbers for the specific practitioner(s) who will certify the patients’ qualifying medical conditions;
- certifying that the designated certifier and the group will be responsible for the continuing care and treatment of the patients whose qualifying medical conditions are certified ;
- certifying that the designated certifier will have access to shared or consolidated health records and will meet all the medical cannabis program’s reporting requirements; and
- agreeing that no health care practitioner who is a member of the group practice may directly or indirectly receive compensation based on the number of patients’ medical conditions certified for the Minnesota medical cannabis patient registry program.

If the application contains complete information about both the group practice and the designated-certifier’s acceptance of the role, MDH will acknowledge by letter that the group has notified MDH of its intent to use a medical cannabis designated-certifier and that MDH approves of the named designated-certifier(s) serving in this role as satisfying the medical cannabis programs’ legal requirements. MDH will approve these designations and remains responsible for enforcing the program’s regulations on a case-by-case basis.

**Effective Date:** Immediately



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For more information, contact:  
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<sup>1</sup> The designated certifier must be a Minnesota licensed doctor of medicine, a Minnesota licensed physician assistant acting within the scope of authorized practice, or a Minnesota licensed advanced practice registered nurse who has primary responsibility for the care and treatment of the qualifying medical condition of the person diagnosed. *See* Minnesota Statutes section 152.22, subdivision 4.