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**SENATE BILL 5498**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2019 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Takko and Nguyen

AN ACT Relating to establishing compassionate care renewals for medical marijuana qualifying patients; amending RCW 69.51A.030 and 69.51A.230; adding a new section to chapter 69.51A RCW; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 69.51A.030 and 2015 c 70 s 18 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The following acts do not constitute crimes under state law or unprofessional conduct under chapter 18.130 RCW, and a health care professional may not be arrested, searched, prosecuted, disciplined, or subject to other criminal sanctions or civil consequences or liability under state law, or have real or personal property searched, seized, or forfeited pursuant to state law, notwithstanding any other provision of law as long as the health care professional complies with subsection (2) of this section:

(a) Advising a patient about the risks and benefits of medical use of marijuana or that the patient may benefit from the medical use of marijuana; or

(b) Providing a patient or designated provider meeting the criteria established under RCW 69.51A.010 with an authorization, based upon the health care professional's assessment of the patient's medical history and current medical condition, if the health care professional has complied with this chapter and he or she determines within a professional standard of care or in the individual health care professional's medical judgment the qualifying patient may benefit from the medical use of marijuana.

(2)(a) A health care professional may provide a qualifying patient or that patient's designated provider with an authorization for the medical use of marijuana in accordance with this section.

(b) In order to authorize for the medical use of marijuana under (a) of this subsection, the health care professional must:

(i) Have a documented relationship with the patient, as a principal care provider or a specialist, relating to the diagnosis and ongoing treatment or monitoring of the patient's terminal or debilitating medical condition;

(ii) Complete an in-person physical examination of the patient or a remote physical examination of the patient if one is determined to be appropriate under (c)(iii) of this subsection;

(iii) Document the terminal or debilitating medical condition of the patient in the patient's medical record and that the patient may benefit from treatment of this condition or its symptoms with medical use of marijuana;

(iv) Inform the patient of other options for treating the terminal or debilitating medical condition and documenting in the patient's medical record that the patient has received this information;

(v) Document in the patient's medical record other measures attempted to treat the terminal or debilitating medical condition that do not involve the medical use of marijuana; and

(vi) Complete an authorization on forms developed by the department, in accordance with subsection (3) of this section.

(c)(i) For a qualifying patient eighteen years of age or older, an authorization expires one year after its issuance. For a qualifying patient less than eighteen years of age, an authorization expires six months after its issuance.

(ii) An authorization may be renewed upon completion of an in-person physical examination or a remote physical examination of the patient if one is determined to be appropriate under (c)(iii) of this subsection and, in compliance with the other requirements of (b) of this subsection.

(iii) Following an in-person physical examination to authorize the use of marijuana for medical purposes, the health care professional may determine and note in the patient's medical record that subsequent physical examinations for the purposes of renewing an authorization may occur through the use of telemedicine technology if the health care professional determines that requiring the qualifying patient to attend a physical examination in person to renew an authorization would likely result in severe hardship to the qualifying patient because of the qualifying patient's physical or emotional condition.

(iv) When renewing a qualifying patient's authorization for the medical use of marijuana on or after the effective date of this section, the health care professional may indicate that the qualifying patient qualifies for a compassionate care renewal of his or her registration in the medical marijuana authorization database and recognition card if the health care professional determines that requiring the qualifying patient to renew a registration in person would likely result in severe hardship to the qualifying patient because of the qualifying patient's physical or emotional condition. A compassionate care renewal of a qualifying patient's registration and recognition card allows the qualifying patient to receive renewals without the need to be physically present at a retailer and without the requirement to have a photograph taken.

(d) A health care professional shall not:

(i) Accept, solicit, or offer any form of pecuniary remuneration from or to a marijuana retailer, marijuana processor, or marijuana producer;

(ii) Offer a discount or any other thing of value to a qualifying patient who is a customer of, or agrees to be a customer of, a particular marijuana retailer;

(iii) Examine or offer to examine a patient for purposes of diagnosing a terminal or debilitating medical condition at a location where marijuana is produced, processed, or sold;

(iv) Have a business or practice which consists primarily of authorizing the medical use of marijuana or authorize the medical use of marijuana at any location other than his or her practice's permanent physical location;

(v) Except as provided in RCW 69.51A.280, sell, or provide at no charge, marijuana concentrates, marijuana-infused products, or useable marijuana to a qualifying patient or designated provider; or

(vi) Hold an economic interest in an enterprise that produces, processes, or sells marijuana if the health care professional authorizes the medical use of marijuana.

(3) The department shall develop the form for the health care professional to use as an authorization for qualifying patients and designated providers. The form shall include the qualifying patient's or designated provider's name, address, and date of birth; the health care professional's name, address, and license number; the amount of marijuana recommended for the qualifying patient; a telephone number where the authorization can be verified during normal business hours; the dates of issuance and expiration; and a statement that an authorization does not provide protection from arrest unless the qualifying patient or designated provider is also entered in the medical marijuana authorization database and holds a recognition card.

(4) ((~~Until July 1, 2016, a health care professional who, within a single calendar month, authorizes the medical use of marijuana to more than thirty patients must report the number of authorizations issued.~~

~~(5)~~)) The appropriate health professions disciplining authority may inspect or request patient records to confirm compliance with this section. The health care professional must provide access to or produce documents, records, or other items that are within his or her possession or control within twenty-one calendar days of service of a request by the health professions disciplining authority. If the twenty-one calendar day limit results in a hardship upon the health care professional, he or she may request, for good cause, an extension not to exceed thirty additional calendar days. Failure to produce the documents, records, or other items shall result in citations and fines issued consistent with RCW 18.130.230. Failure to otherwise comply with the requirements of this section shall be considered unprofessional conduct and subject to sanctions under chapter 18.130 RCW.

((~~(6)~~)) (5) After a health care professional authorizes a qualifying patient for the medical use of marijuana, he or she may discuss with the qualifying patient how to use marijuana and the types of products the qualifying patient should seek from a retail outlet.

**Sec.**  RCW 69.51A.230 and 2015 c 70 s 21 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The department must contract with an entity to create, administer, and maintain a secure and confidential medical marijuana authorization database that, beginning July 1, 2016, allows:

(a) A marijuana retailer with a medical marijuana endorsement to add a qualifying patient or designated provider and include the amount of marijuana concentrates, useable marijuana, marijuana-infused products, or plants for which the qualifying patient is authorized under RCW 69.51A.210;

(b) Persons authorized to prescribe or dispense controlled substances to access health care information on their patients for the purpose of providing medical or pharmaceutical care for their patients;

(c) A qualifying patient or designated provider to request and receive his or her own health care information or information on any person or entity that has queried their name or information;

(d) Appropriate local, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement or prosecutorial officials who are engaged in a bona fide specific investigation of suspected marijuana-related activity that may be illegal under Washington state law to confirm the validity of the recognition card of a qualifying patient or designated provider;

(e) A marijuana retailer holding a medical marijuana endorsement to confirm the validity of the recognition card of a qualifying patient or designated provider;

(f) The department of revenue to verify tax exemptions under chapters 82.08 and 82.12 RCW;

(g) The department and the health care professional's disciplining authorities to monitor authorizations and ensure compliance with this chapter and chapter 18.130 RCW by their licensees; and

(h) Authorizations to expire six months or one year after entry into the medical marijuana authorization database, depending on whether the authorization is for a minor or an adult.

(2) A qualifying patient and his or her designated provider, if any, may be placed in the medical marijuana authorization database at a marijuana retailer with a medical marijuana endorsement. After a qualifying patient or designated provider is placed in the medical marijuana authorization database, he or she must be provided with a recognition card that contains identifiers required in subsection (3) of this section.

(3) The recognition card requirements must be developed by the department in rule and include:

(a) A randomly generated and unique identifying number;

(b) For designated providers, the unique identifying number of the qualifying patient whom the provider is assisting;

(c) A photograph of the qualifying patient's or designated provider's face taken by an employee of the marijuana retailer with a medical marijuana endorsement at the same time that the qualifying patient or designated provider is being placed in the medical marijuana authorization database in accordance with rules adopted by the department;

(d) The amount of marijuana concentrates, useable marijuana, marijuana-infused products, or plants for which the qualifying patient is authorized under RCW 69.51A.210;

(e) The effective date and expiration date of the recognition card;

(f) The name of the health care professional who authorized the qualifying patient or designated provider; and

(g) For the recognition card, additional security features as necessary to ensure its validity.

(4)(a) For qualifying patients who are eighteen years of age or older and their designated providers, recognition cards are valid for one year from the date the health care professional issued the authorization. For qualifying patients who are under the age of eighteen and their designated providers, recognition cards are valid for six months from the date the health care professional issued the authorization. Qualifying patients may not be reentered into the medical marijuana authorization database until they have been reexamined by a health care professional and determined to meet the definition of qualifying patient. After reexamination, a marijuana retailer with a medical marijuana endorsement must reenter the qualifying patient or designated provider into the medical marijuana authorization database and a new recognition card will then be issued in accordance with department rules.

(b) Beginning on the effective date of this section, a qualifying patient's registration in the medical marijuana authorization database and his or her recognition card may be renewed by a qualifying patient's designated provider without the physical presence of the qualifying patient at the retailer if the authorization from the health care professional indicates that the qualifying patient qualifies for a compassionate care renewal, as provided in RCW 69.51A.030. A qualifying patient receiving renewals under the compassionate care renewal provisions is exempt from the photograph requirements under subsection (3)(c) of this section.

(5) If a recognition card is lost or stolen, a marijuana retailer with a medical marijuana endorsement, in conjunction with the database administrator, may issue a new card that will be valid for six months to one year if the patient is reexamined by a health care professional and determined to meet the definition of qualifying patient and depending on whether the patient is under the age of eighteen or eighteen years of age or older as provided in subsection (4) of this section. If a reexamination is not performed, the expiration date of the replacement recognition card must be the same as the lost or stolen recognition card.

(6) The database administrator must remove qualifying patients and designated providers from the medical marijuana authorization database upon expiration of the recognition card. Qualifying patients and designated providers may request to remove themselves from the medical marijuana authorization database before expiration of a recognition card and health care professionals may request to remove qualifying patients and designated providers from the medical marijuana authorization database if the patient or provider no longer qualifies for the medical use of marijuana. The database administrator must retain database records for at least five calendar years to permit the state liquor and cannabis board and the department of revenue to verify eligibility for tax exemptions.

(7) During development of the medical marijuana authorization database, the database administrator must consult with the department, stakeholders, and persons with relevant expertise to include, but not be limited to, qualifying patients, designated providers, health care professionals, state and local law enforcement agencies, and the University of Washington computer science and engineering security and privacy research lab or a certified cybersecurity firm, vendor, or service.

(8) The medical marijuana authorization database must meet the following requirements:

(a) Any personally identifiable information included in the database must be nonreversible, pursuant to definitions and standards set forth by the national institute of standards and technology;

(b) Any personally identifiable information included in the database must not be susceptible to linkage by use of data external to the database;

(c) The database must incorporate current best differential privacy practices, allowing for maximum accuracy of database queries while minimizing the chances of identifying the personally identifiable information included therein; and

(d) The database must be upgradable and updated in a timely fashion to keep current with state of the art privacy and security standards and practices.

(9)(a) Personally identifiable information of qualifying patients and designated providers included in the medical marijuana authorization database is confidential and exempt from public disclosure, inspection, or copying under chapter 42.56 RCW.

(b) Information contained in the medical marijuana authorization database may be released in aggregate form, with all personally ((~~identifying [identifiable]~~)) identifiable information redacted, for the purpose of statistical analysis and oversight of agency performance and actions.

(c) Information contained in the medical marijuana authorization database shall not be shared with the federal government or its agents unless the particular ((~~[qualifying]~~)) qualifying patient or designated provider is convicted in state court for violating this chapter or chapter 69.50 RCW.

(10)((~~(a)~~)) The department must charge a one dollar fee for each initial and renewal recognition card issued by a marijuana retailer with a medical marijuana endorsement. The marijuana retailer with a medical marijuana endorsement shall collect the fee from the qualifying patient or designated provider at the time that he or she is entered into the database and issued a recognition card. The department shall establish a schedule for marijuana retailers with a medical marijuana endorsement to remit the fees collected. Fees collected under this subsection shall be deposited into the health professions account created under RCW 43.70.320.

((~~(b) By November 1, 2016, the department shall report to the governor and the fiscal committees of both the house of representatives and the senate regarding the cost of implementation and administration of the medical marijuana authorization database. The report must specify amounts from the health professions account used to finance the establishment and administration of the medical marijuana authorization database as well as estimates of the continuing costs associated with operating the medical marijuana [authorization] database. The report must also provide initial enrollment figures in the medical marijuana authorization database and estimates of expected future enrollment.~~))

(11) If the database administrator fails to comply with this section, the department may cancel any contracts with the database administrator and contract with another database administrator to continue administration of the database. A database administrator who fails to comply with this section is subject to a fine of up to five thousand dollars in addition to any penalties established in the contract. Fines collected under this section must be deposited into the health professions account created under RCW 43.70.320.

(12) The department may adopt rules to implement this section.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 69.51A RCW to read as follows:

The compassionate care renewals permitted in RCW 69.51A.030 and 69.51A.230 take effect upon the effective date of this section. The department may adopt rules to implement these renewals and to streamline administrative functions. However, the policy established in these sections may not be delayed until the rules are adopted.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately.

**--- END ---**