



March 16, 2020

Dear Governor Inslee,

As cannabis retailers, producers, and processors, the Craft Cannabis Coalition is writing in the hope that you consider the impact to our industry and medical patients as you weigh steps to curb the spread of Covid-19.

We are now in our fifth year as industry stakeholders and our collective experience over this period of time has been that approximately 60% of our customers purchase cannabis products for medical conditions ranging from skin ailments and mild anxiety to the treatment of severe diseases such as cancer, MS, HIV, Crohn's disease, epilepsy, and more.¹ The customers suffering from these debilitating conditions rely upon cannabis (and the advice of medically certified staff members) to manage these conditions.

In the case of a government ordered lockdown there is no WHO, CDC or other standard for what businesses are deemed "essential". However, the clear intent is to limit the movement of people while ensuring access to medicine, medical services, banking and groceries.

Prior to adult use legalization, Washington counted approximately 363,000 medical marijuana users.² Currently, there are just 44,532 registered in the Department of Health database.³ Our experience suggests that this 88% reduction in reported medical patients is primarily the result of both a lack of medically endorsed stores, and patients being reluctant to enroll on a State database (there is a perception in the patient community that absent HIPAA laws, personal information could be shared). Rather than "disappearing," our experience tells us that 88% of medical patients are instead getting their needs met through access to products that are being purchased at the widely available Washington cannabis retailers.

The State of Washington already recognizes cannabis as medicine as evidenced by the exclusion of sales tax on "medical cannabis" being purchased by a registered patient (like any other medicine). Additionally, the Labor & Industry designation for cannabis retail shops is "Specialty Grocery." In the event of a lockdown, the government should designate all cannabis businesses, both recreational and medicinal, as essential

¹ <https://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/Marijuana/MedicalMarijuana/PatientInformation>

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https://depts.washington.edu/esreview/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Archambault_McNeilly_Row_I-502_PublishOnline.pdf

³ <https://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/Marijuana/MedicalMarijuana/AuthorizationDatabase/DataandStatistic>

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businesses to ensure continuity of access to medical cannabis to treat the ongoing health issues of this impacted population.

We are asking that any future policy regarding cannabis sales, not limit access to those who are currently in the database nor limit sales to only medically endorsed dispensaries. To do so would effectively cut off access to 88% of medical use patients. Moreover, this approach would further impact our already taxed healthcare system when these patients are forced to obtain medical authorization from a doctor in order to access the same products they are relying upon today.

Being on the front line of this current event, we are serious about our responsibility to the community and have measures in place to protect our employees and customers to the very best of our abilities; these include strict sanitation procedures, protocols for social distancing within our establishments, and a heightened awareness of the health of ourselves and our peers.

As stakeholders we are proud to operate in a State that provides a framework for a highly regulated retail environment that allows safe access to cannabis for all adults. It is our hope that even in the midst of this current health crisis we can continue to provide the same level of service, education, and access to our most vulnerable customers – those using cannabis for legitimate medical needs.

Very Sincerely,

Eric Gaston, Evergreen Market
Shea Hynes, GM & Co-Founder, Lux Pot Shop
Ian Eisenberg, Uncle Ike's
Ramsey Hamide, Main Street Cannabis
Becca Burghardi, Northwest Cannabis Solutions
Chad Champagne, 420 Cannabis
Shawn DeNae & Bill Wagenseller, Washington Bud Company
Matthew McCoy, Managing Member, 1937 Farms
TJ Werth, Top Shelf
Scott Atkison, Zips Cannabis and Canna4Life