

RHODE ISLAND PATIENT ADVOCACY COALITION



<http://www.RIpatients.org> (401) 861-1601

1. I'm a Rhode Island doctor—can I legally recommend medical marijuana?

Yes. Under the 2006 Rhode Island Medical Marijuana Act, “A practitioner shall not be subject to arrest, prosecution, or penalty in any manner... for providing written certifications or for otherwise stating that, in the practitioner's professional opinion, the potential benefits of the medical marijuana would likely outweigh the health risks for a patient.”

2. Will this endanger my license to prescribe medicine?

No. The Medical Marijuana Act states, “A practitioner shall not be subject to... civil penalty or disciplinary action by the Rhode Island Board of Medical Licensure and Discipline or by any another business or occupational or professional licensing board or bureau.”

3. Has the federal government prosecuted doctors for medical marijuana?

No. In 2003, the Supreme Court of the United States allowed a lower court's decision in *Conant v. Walters* to stand. According to this ruling, Dr. Conant and all American doctors are protected under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution for discussing medical marijuana with patients and for recommending its use verbally or in writing. In Rhode Island, physicians can write recommendations (not prescriptions) for marijuana.

4. Do I have to fill out a lot of paperwork to recommend medical marijuana?

No. The application form for the RI Medical Marijuana Program is just three pages, and doctors only need to complete one, the Physician Form. Doctors only need check a box indicating for which qualifying medical condition they are recommending marijuana, besides filling in their contact info. The other two pages are the Patient Form (for the patient's contact info) and the Minor Form (only applies if the patient's age is under 18).

5. For what medical conditions may I recommend medical marijuana?

The qualifying medical conditions are: Cancer, HIV/AIDS, Multiple Sclerosis, glaucoma, Hepatitis C, Crohn's Disease, Alzheimer's Disease, and any chronic, debilitating conditions that produce wasting syndrome, severe nausea, severe pain, or spasms.

6. What is the standard or threshold at which I may recommend marijuana?

At the bottom of the Physician Form for the Medical Marijuana Program, a doctor's signature attests that, “It is my professional opinion that the potential benefits of the medical use of marijuana would likely outweigh the health risks for this patient.”

7. Do RI's medical organizations support recommending medical marijuana?

Yes, inc. the Medical Society, Nurses Association, and Academy for Family Physicians.