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*THERAPEUTIC CANNABIS PROGRAM*

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**RSA 126-X:4, VI – NOTICE EXPLAINING FEDERAL LAW  
ON THE POSSESSION OF CANNABIS**

RSA 126-X, Use of Cannabis for Therapeutic Purposes creates an exemption in state law from criminal penalties for the therapeutic use of cannabis provided that its use is in compliance with RSA 126-X. State law does not exempt a person from federal criminal penalties for the possession of cannabis.

Federal administrations have expressed intention not to pursue or target patients and their caregivers who possess or use small amounts of cannabis for therapeutic use who are part of and compliant with a well-regulated state therapeutic cannabis program. However, federal law does not allow for the medical or therapeutic use of cannabis, and the federal government can enforce federal cannabis laws anywhere in the United States, including in states that allow the therapeutic use of cannabis. Federal criminal penalties for the possession of cannabis, in any amount, range from misdemeanors to felonies, and may include incarceration and fines.

To decrease the risk of any federal law enforcement action, patients and caregivers should know and abide by New Hampshire law with regard to the possession and use of therapeutic cannabis at all times.

**OTHER FEDERAL IMPLICATIONS**

Qualifying patients who use cannabis may be denied rights and privileges by federal agencies including, but not limited to, those related to employment such as driving a commercial vehicle, those related to owning, possessing, or purchasing a firearm and ammunition, those related to federally subsidized housing, those related to immigration and naturalization, or the inability to pass a security clearance. (See below for more information on the federal firearms restriction.)

**FEDERAL FIREARMS NOTICE**

The U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) has directed federal firearms licensees, in an open letter issued in 2011, not to transfer firearms or ammunition to users of a controlled substance, including marijuana, regardless of whether their state has passed legislation authorizing marijuana use for medicinal purposes. According to the federal directive, any user of marijuana “is an unlawful user of or addicted to a controlled substance, and is prohibited by Federal law from possessing firearms or ammunition.”

If a federal firearms licensee is aware that a person is in possession of a card authorizing the possession and use of marijuana under state law, that licensee has “reasonable cause to believe” that the person is an unlawful user of a controlled substance, and may not transfer firearms or ammunition to that person, even if the person answered “no” to question 21.g on “ATF Form 4473.” Note that this form was revised effective December 2022 and includes specific reference to state marijuana laws.

References

- ATF open letter: <https://www.atf.gov/file/60211/download>
- ATF Form 4473: <https://www.atf.gov/file/61446/download>
- HUD memos: <https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/MED-MARIJUANA.PDF>  
<https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/USEOFMARIJINMFASSISTPROPTY.PDF>