

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2019 SESSION

CHAPTER 690

An Act to amend and reenact §§ 18.2-250.1, 54.1-3408.3, 54.1-3442.5, 54.1-3442.6, and 54.1-3442.7 of the Code of Virginia, relating to cannabidiol oil and THC-A oil; registered agent; pharmaceutical processors.

[S 1719]

Approved March 21, 2019

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 18.2-250.1, 54.1-3408.3, 54.1-3442.5, 54.1-3442.6, and 54.1-3442.7 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 18.2-250.1. Possession of marijuana unlawful.

A. It is unlawful for any person knowingly or intentionally to possess marijuana unless the substance was obtained directly from, or pursuant to, a valid prescription or order of a practitioner while acting in the course of his professional practice, or except as otherwise authorized by the Drug Control Act (§ 54.1-3400 et seq.).

Upon the prosecution of a person for violation of this section, ownership or occupancy of the premises or vehicle upon or in which marijuana was found shall not create a presumption that such person either knowingly or intentionally possessed such marijuana.

Any person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be confined in jail not more than 30 days and fined not more than \$500, either or both; any person, upon a second or subsequent conviction of a violation of this section, is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

B. The provisions of this section shall not apply to members of state, federal, county, city, or town law-enforcement agencies, jail officers, or correctional officers, as defined in § 53.1-1, certified as handlers of dogs trained in the detection of controlled substances when possession of marijuana is necessary for the performance of their duties.

C. In any prosecution under this section involving marijuana in the form of cannabidiol oil or THC-A oil as those terms are defined in § 54.1-3408.3, it shall be an affirmative defense that the individual possessed such oil pursuant to a valid written certification issued by a practitioner in the course of his professional practice pursuant to § 54.1-3408.3 for treatment or to alleviate the symptoms of (i) the individual's diagnosed condition or disease, or (ii) if such individual is the parent or legal guardian of a minor or of an incapacitated adult as defined in § 18.2-369, such minor's or incapacitated adult's diagnosed condition or disease, or (iii) if such individual has been designated as a registered agent pursuant to § 54.1-3408.3, the diagnosed condition or disease of his principal or, if the principal is the parent or legal guardian of a minor or of an incapacitated adult as defined in § 18.2-369, such minor's or incapacitated adult's diagnosed condition or disease. If the individual files the valid written certification with the court at least 10 days prior to trial and causes a copy of such written certification to be delivered to the attorney for the Commonwealth, such written certification shall be prima facie evidence that such oil was possessed pursuant to a valid written certification.

§ 54.1-3408.3. Certification for use of cannabidiol oil or THC-A oil for treatment.

A. As used in this section:

"Cannabidiol oil" means a processed Cannabis plant extract that contains at least 15 percent cannabidiol but no more than five percent tetrahydrocannabinol, or a dilution of the resin of the Cannabis plant that contains at least five milligrams of cannabidiol per milliliter but not more than five percent tetrahydrocannabinol.

"Practitioner" means a practitioner of medicine or osteopathy licensed by the Board of Medicine.

"Registered agent" means an individual designated by a patient who has been issued a written certification, or, if such patient is a minor or an incapacitated adult as defined in § 18.2-369, designated by such patient's parent or legal guardian, and registered with the Board pursuant to subsection G.

"THC-A oil" means a processed Cannabis plant extract that contains at least 15 percent tetrahydrocannabinol acid but not more than five percent tetrahydrocannabinol, or a dilution of the resin of the Cannabis plant that contains at least five milligrams of tetrahydrocannabinol acid per milliliter but not more than five percent tetrahydrocannabinol.

B. A practitioner in the course of his professional practice may issue a written certification for the use of cannabidiol oil or THC-A oil for treatment or to alleviate the symptoms of any diagnosed condition or disease determined by the practitioner to benefit from such use.

C. The written certification shall be on a form provided by the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court developed in consultation with the Board of Medicine. Such written certification shall contain the name, address, and telephone number of the practitioner, the name and address of the

patient issued the written certification, the date on which the written certification was made, and the signature of the practitioner. Such written certification issued pursuant to subsection B shall expire no later than one year after its issuance unless the practitioner provides in such written certification an earlier expiration.

D. No practitioner shall be prosecuted under § 18.2-248 or 18.2-248.1 for dispensing or distributing cannabidiol oil or THC-A oil for the treatment or to alleviate the symptoms of a patient's diagnosed condition or disease pursuant to a written certification issued pursuant to subsection B. Nothing in this section shall preclude the Board of Medicine from sanctioning a practitioner for failing to properly evaluate or treat a patient's medical condition or otherwise violating the applicable standard of care for evaluating or treating medical conditions.

E. A practitioner who issues a written certification to a patient pursuant to this section shall register with the Board. The Board shall, in consultation with the Board of Medicine, set a limit on the number of patients to whom a practitioner may issue a written certification.

F. A patient who has been issued a written certification shall register with the Board or, if such patient is a minor or an incapacitated adult as defined in § 18.2-369, a patient's parent or legal guardian shall register and shall register such patient with the Board.

G. *A patient, or, if such patient is a minor or an incapacitated adult as defined in § 18.2-369, such patient's parent or legal guardian, may designate an individual to act as his registered agent for the purposes of receiving cannabidiol oil or THC-A oil pursuant to a valid written certification. Such designated individual shall register with the Board. The Board may set a limit on the number patients for whom any individual is authorized to act as a registered agent.*

H. The Board shall promulgate regulations to implement the registration process. Such regulations shall include (i) a mechanism for sufficiently identifying the practitioner issuing the written certification, the patient being treated by the practitioner, *his registered agent*, and, if such patient is a minor or an incapacitated adult as defined in § 18.2-369, the patient's parent or legal guardian; (ii) a process for ensuring that any changes in the information are reported in an appropriate timeframe; and (iii) a prohibition for the patient to be issued a written certification by more than one practitioner during any given time period.

~~H. I.~~ Information obtained under the registration process shall be confidential and shall not be subject to the disclosure provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (§ 2.2-3700 et seq.). However, reasonable access to registry information shall be provided to (i) the Chairmen of the House and Senate Committees for Courts of Justice, (ii) state and federal agencies or local law enforcement for the purpose of investigating or prosecuting a specific individual for a specific violation of law, (iii) licensed physicians or pharmacists for the purpose of providing patient care and drug therapy management and monitoring of drugs obtained by a registered patient, (iv) a pharmaceutical processor involved in the treatment of a registered patient, or (v) a registered patient, *his registered agent*, or, if such patient is a minor or an incapacitated adult as defined in § 18.2-369, the patient's parent or legal guardian, but only with respect to information related to such registered patient.

§ 54.1-3442.5. Definitions.

As used in this article:

"Cannabidiol oil" has the same meaning as specified in § 54.1-3408.3.

"Pharmaceutical processor" means a facility that (i) has obtained a permit from the Board pursuant to § 54.1-3408.3 and (ii) cultivates Cannabis plants intended only for the production of cannabidiol oil or THC-A oil, produces cannabidiol oil or THC-A oil, and dispenses cannabidiol oil or THC-A oil to a registered patient, *his registered agent*, or, if such patient is a minor or an incapacitated adult as defined in § 18.2-369, such patient's parent or legal guardian.

"Practitioner" has the same meaning as specified in § 54.1-3408.3.

"Registered agent" has the same meaning as specified in § 54.1-3408.3.

"THC-A oil" has the same meaning as specified in § 54.1-3408.3.

§ 54.1-3442.6. Permit to operate pharmaceutical processor.

A. No person shall operate a pharmaceutical processor without first obtaining a permit from the Board. The application for such permit shall be made on a form provided by the Board and signed by a pharmacist who will be in full and actual charge of the pharmaceutical processor. The Board shall establish an application fee and other general requirements for such application.

B. Each permit shall expire annually on a date determined by the Board in regulation. The number of permits that the Board may issue or renew in any year is limited to one for each health service area established by the Board of Health. Permits shall be displayed in a conspicuous place on the premises of the pharmaceutical processor.

C. The Board shall adopt regulations establishing health, safety, and security requirements for pharmaceutical processors. Such regulations shall include requirements for (i) physical standards; (ii) location restrictions; (iii) security systems and controls; (iv) minimum equipment and resources; (v) recordkeeping; (vi) labeling and packaging; (vii) quarterly inspections; (viii) processes for safely and securely cultivating Cannabis plants intended for producing cannabidiol oil and THC-A oil, producing cannabidiol oil and THC-A oil, and dispensing and delivering in person cannabidiol oil and THC-A oil

to a registered patient, *his registered agent*, or, if such patient is a minor or an incapacitated adult as defined in § 18.2-369, such patient's parent or legal guardian; (ix) a maximum number of marijuana plants a pharmaceutical processor may possess at any one time; (x) the secure disposal of plant remains; ~~and~~ (xi) a process for registering a cannabidiol oil and THC-A oil product; ~~and (xii) a process for the wholesale distribution of and the transfer of cannabidiol oil and THC-A oil products between pharmaceutical processors.~~

D. Every pharmaceutical processor shall be under the personal supervision of a licensed pharmacist on the premises of the pharmaceutical processor.

E. The Board shall require an applicant for a pharmaceutical processor permit to submit to fingerprinting and provide personal descriptive information to be forwarded along with his fingerprints through the Central Criminal Records Exchange to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for the purpose of obtaining criminal history record information regarding the applicant. The cost of fingerprinting and the criminal history record search shall be paid by the applicant. The Central Criminal Records Exchange shall forward the results of the criminal history background check to the Board or its designee, which shall be a governmental entity.

F. *In addition to other employees authorized by the Board, a pharmaceutical processor may employ individuals who may have less than two years of experience (i) to perform cultivation-related duties under the supervision of an individual who has received a degree in horticulture or a certification recognized by the Board or who has at least two years of experience cultivating plants and (ii) to perform extraction-related duties under the supervision of an individual who has a degree in chemistry or pharmacology or at least two years of experience extracting chemicals from plants.*

G. No person who has been convicted of a felony or of any offense in violation of Article 1 (§ 18.2-247 et seq.) or Article 1.1 (§ 18.2-265.1 et seq.) of Chapter 7 of Title 18.2 shall be employed by or act as an agent of a pharmaceutical processor.

§ 54.1-3442.7. Dispensing cannabidiol oil and THC-A oil; report.

A. A pharmaceutical processor shall dispense or deliver cannabidiol oil or THC-A oil only in person to (i) a patient who is a Virginia resident, has been issued a valid written certification, and is registered with the Board pursuant to § 54.1-3408.3, *(ii) such patient's registered agent*, or ~~(ii)~~ (iii) if such patient is a minor or an incapacitated adult as defined in § 18.2-369, such patient's parent or legal guardian who is a Virginia resident and is registered with the Board pursuant to § 54.1-3408.3. Prior to the initial dispensing of each written certification, the pharmacist or pharmacy technician at the location of the pharmaceutical processor shall make and maintain for two years a paper or electronic copy of the written certification that provides an exact image of the document that is clearly legible; shall view a current photo identification of the patient, *registered agent*, parent, or legal guardian; and shall verify current board registration of the practitioner and the corresponding patient, *registered agent*, parent, or legal guardian. Prior to any subsequent dispensing of each written certification, the pharmacist, pharmacy technician, or delivery agent shall view the current written certification; a current photo identification of the patient, *registered agent*, parent, or legal guardian; and the current board registration issued to the patient, *registered agent*, parent, or legal guardian. No pharmaceutical processor shall dispense more than a 90-day supply for any patient during any 90-day period. The Board shall establish in regulation an amount of cannabidiol oil or THC-A oil that constitutes a 90-day supply to treat or alleviate the symptoms of a patient's diagnosed condition or disease.

B. A pharmaceutical processor shall dispense only cannabidiol oil and THC-A oil that has been cultivated and produced on the premises of ~~such a~~ *a pharmaceutical processor permitted by the Board. A pharmaceutical processor may begin cultivation upon being issued a permit by the Board.*

C. The Board shall report annually by December 1 to the Chairmen of the House and Senate Committees for Courts of Justice on the operation of pharmaceutical processors issued a permit by the Board, including the number of practitioners, patients, *registered agents*, and parents or legal guardians of patients who have registered with the Board and the number of written certifications issued pursuant to § 54.1-3408.3.

D. ~~A pharmaceutical processor shall ensure that the~~ *The* concentration of tetrahydrocannabinol in any THC-A oil on site is ~~within~~ *may be up to 10 percent of greater than or less than* the level of tetrahydrocannabinol measured for labeling ~~and. A pharmaceutical processor shall ensure that such concentration in any THC-A onsite is within such range and shall establish a stability testing schedule of THC-A oil.~~

2. That the Board of Pharmacy shall promulgate regulations to implement the provisions of this act to be effective within 280 days of its enactment.