

## **Medical Cannabis on the Ballot for Hardin County Voters**

Hardin County voters will soon decide whether medical cannabis dispensaries, cultivators, processors, and safety compliance facilities will be allowed to operate in the unincorporated area of the county. On June 25<sup>th</sup> Fiscal Court passed a resolution to place this important decision on the November 5, 2024, General Election ballots. That voting will start as early as October 31<sup>st</sup> when early voting begins at the Hardin County Clerk's Main Office (Elizabethtown) and Colvin Community Center (Radcliff).

It's important to help voters understand the significance of their vote to allow or prohibit medical cannabis facilities to operate in unincorporated Hardin County. This vote does not affect patient accessibility to medical cannabis.

On April 17<sup>th</sup> Governor Beshear signed HB829 declaring medical cannabis a healthcare necessity. Although established by the state, counties and cities must control the medical cannabis facilities. The medical cannabis program is set up to ensure it is prescribed by authorized physicians for medical conditions only such as cancer, PTSD, MS, muscle spasms, epilepsy, chronic nausea, and chronic pain.

Initially, one dispensary is allowed by state law to operate within a city or county and only four dispensaries will be granted in our Lincoln Trail geographic region of 12 counties. Note that KY is divided into 11 geographic regions and the entire state will only be allowed, initially, to operate 48 dispensaries, 16 cultivators, 10 processors, and no limitation on safety compliance facilities.

Dispensaries will be determined by a lottery draw of eligible operators. If Hardin County voters decide to allow medical cannabis dispensaries in the unincorporated area of the county, potential local operators may not be selected to participate in the program during the initial lottery drawing.

Supply limits exist for patients using the drug which will be monitored by approved physicians. Restrictions also exist on the locations in which dispensaries, cultivators, and processors may locate. For example, these businesses cannot be located within 1,000 feet of schools or day care facilities. In addition, Fiscal Court recently passed an ordinance that requires medical cannabis businesses to operate in I-1 (light industrial) or I-2 (heavy industrial) zones in unincorporated Hardin County, if HC votes to allow medical cannabis facilities.

Both Radcliff and Elizabethtown city councils voted to opt-in by passing ordinances to allow the facilities within the city limits no matter what the outcome of the vote, but they will still vote whether the facilities can be located in the unincorporated areas.

Voters living in Vine Grove and West Point city limits will have 2 votes which could be confusing. These voters decide whether their city opts-in or opts-out separate from the county vote. Their county vote will still help determine the future of facilities out in the county.

Note that school boards must establish policies to permit or prohibit minor registered patients to consume medicinal cannabis at school.

**Allowing the operation of medical cannabis businesses in Hardin County is an important decision and should be taken seriously. I encourage you to read and learn all you can before casting your vote. For more information on KY's medical cannabis program visit [kymedcan.ky.gov](http://kymedcan.ky.gov).**