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Colorado Marijuana Industry: Take immediate steps to help "flatten the curve" on COVID-19

On March 17, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) issued a public health order to close bars, restaurants, gyms, theaters and casinos for 30 days in an effort to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Medical and retail marijuana stores that attract large numbers of customers will be receiving increased attention in the coming days and may also be ordered closed.

In order to assist our government officials and to responsibly serve individuals that depend on safe access to marijuana products, we encourage all medical and retail marijuana stores to adopt the following procedures immediately:

Transactions must be conducted in a way that provides for CDPHE-recommended distancing of 6 feet between your patients/customers and staff.

Reduce capacity limits in waiting rooms and sales areas – requiring employees, patients and customers to maintain a minimum 6-foot separation – and do not allow lines to form.

Cease extended budtender consult sessions with customers and do not allow customers to “smell/view” products.

Increase store sanitization processes.

Recommendations to help attain the above:

Create visual markings on the floor (tape works great) to show patients/customers and employees 6-foot distances.

Post signage to further encourage CDPHE-recommended distancing of 6 feet.

If available, encourage online reservations and pickup of product.

Reduce waiting room capacity and eliminate lines:

- use “deli counter” ticket systems;

- collect customer cell numbers or use online reservation/paging applications allowing customers to wait in their car until called.

Update training and sanitization efforts:

- regular hand-washing breaks and increased use of gloves;

- post gloved employees at doors to open and close entrances and exits on behalf of customers;

- require symptomatic or exposed employees to stay home;

- sanitize common area surfaces multiple times per day.

Ensure hand sanitizer is available for employees, patients and customers.

Safe access to marijuana is a necessity for many patients in Colorado. These individuals have come to depend on access to marijuana through both medical and retail stores. As such, it is imperative that we as an industry do all we can to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.

It should be noted that the suggestions above are merely that: suggestions to help “flatten the curve” on COVID-19. These suggestions are in line with CDPHE current guidance in this ever-evolving pandemic, however, they are not 100 percent proven methods to stopping the spread of COVID-19.

Contact us

To learn more about responsibly serving individuals that depend on safe access to marijuana, please contact Marshall Custer, Steve Levine, Meghan Brennan or your Husch Blackwell attorney.

Husch Blackwell will continue to provide updates upon additional information. Husch Blackwell has launched a COVID-19 response team providing insight to businesses as they address challenges related to the coronavirus outbreak. The page contains programming and content to assist Colorado Marijuana Industry clients and other interested parties across multiple areas of operations, including labor and employment, retailing, and supply chain management, among others.