



## Dickinson-Iron District Health Department

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### News Release

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### Immediate Release

## ***Marijuana, Some Things You Need to Know Before Using***

Kingsford and Iron River, MI, June 15, 2021 – Marijuana, some things you need to know about it before you consider using it. First, as most already know, it is now legal in Michigan, both medical and recreational. On November 6, 2018, Michigan became the first state in the Midwest to legalize recreational marihuana. This law went into effect on December 6, 2018, and is officially called the Michigan Regulation and Taxation of Marihuana Act.

The Michigan Medical Marijuana Program (MMMP) is a state registry program that administers the Michigan Medical Marihuana Act (MMMA) as approved by Michigan voters on November 4, 2008. MMMP is a division within the Marijuana Regulatory Agency (MRA), is separate from the Medical Marijuana Facilities and Adult-Use Establishment Licensing Division within MRA, and is governed by a different law. Only a Medical Doctor (MD) or Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery (DO) who holds a current license to practice in the state of Michigan can complete and sign the physician certification for a qualifying patient. This is NOT a prescription; many confuse it as such.

So, you may be wondering, why bother getting a Medical Marijuana Card if I can now purchase it legally without one. With the Card, it's treated like "medicine." A doctor is stating that you have a medical condition where Medical Marijuana may help but, only certain medical conditions are eligible. The National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine has discovered beneficial uses for marihuana in treating or alleviating the pain, nausea, and other symptoms associated with a variety of debilitating medical conditions. The other difference is the taxes people pay and the amount. The taxes are much higher with recreational marijuana. The Medical Marijuana Card may provide some added protection and benefits but that would be up to the person who possesses one to seek out legal counsel for more specific details on the matter.

Regardless if you are using for medicinal reasons or recreationally, you need to understand what's at stake if you don't follow certain rules:

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- 1.) Allows a person 21 years of age or older to possess, use or consume, purchase, transport or process not more than 2.5 ounces of marihuana (of that amount not more than 15 grams may be marihuana concentrate).
- 2.) Allows a person 21 and older to possess, store and process not more than 10 ounces of marihuana and any marihuana produced by marihuana plants cultivated on the premises and cultivate not more than 12 marihuana plants for personal use.
- 3.) Allows a person to give away or otherwise transfer without remuneration up to 2.5 ounces of marihuana, except that not more than 15 grams of marihuana may be in the form of a marihuana concentrate, to a person 21 years of age or older, as long as the transfer is not advertised or promoted to the public.

There are also other stipulations in place and prohibitions for those who want to use it recreationally, and you can visit [www.legislature.mi.gov](http://www.legislature.mi.gov). Conduct a "Basic MCL Search," type in "Marihuana Act" for more specific information. You will likely need legal counsel to help you interpret the language.

Another area to address is Marihuana and Driving. One can absolutely not operate, navigate, or be in physical control of any motor vehicle, aircraft, snowmobile, off-road vehicle, or motorboat while under the influence of marihuana. This applies even to those who have the Medical Marihuana Card; you are not exempt (or excused) from the penalties from driving under the influence even though you have a "medical reason for using."

- 1.) As a driver you can have on you and transfer up to 2.5 ounces of marihuana (and not more than 15 grams of marihuana may be in the form of a concentrate).
- 2.) Drivers cannot consume marihuana while operating ANY type of motor vehicle.
- 3.) Drivers and/or their passengers are prohibited from smoking marihuana within the passenger area of a vehicle.
- 4.) Drivers and passengers cannot transport marihuana into Canada.

What else a driver needs to know . . . police officers will be looking for impairment based on driving, personal observations of the driver, and how a driver performs on standardized and /or non-standardized field sobriety tests. Based on these three stages of an investigation, a police officer may request a chemical test. If a driver refuses to submit to a chemical test, his/her license will be suspended pursuant to Michigan's implied consent law. Under this law, all drivers are considered to have given consent to the test when they apply for and renew their driver's license.

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The penalties for operating under the influence of marijuana are the same as operating under the influence of alcohol. These penalties can include up to 93 days in jail, up to a \$500 fine, license suspension, six points on a person's driving record, and more. There are heightened penalties if a driver has minors in the vehicle.

One final note, how are individuals storing and keeping their marijuana away from young children who may be present within the home? The Health Department is initiating a "Lock 'Em Up" Campaign to assist parents in keeping their children safe. If you are interested in receiving a Lock Box for your marijuana and other drugs/prescriptions, please contact Kelly at the Health Department at 906-779-7234 to receive a free Lock Box to help keep your kids safe! In addition, if you have questions and would like to learn more, please call the number above. We will do our best to "explain" the Registry Program to you.

- More -

For those individuals with questions regarding the MMMP's application and registration process, please contact MMMP directly by emailing [MRA-MMMPINFO@michigan.gov](mailto:MRA-MMMPINFO@michigan.gov) or call 517-284-6400. You can also review their Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on their website.

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