

A RESOLUTION

25-488

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

April 2, 2024

To declare the existence of an emergency with respect to the need to amend the Legalization of Marijuana for Medical Treatment Initiative of 1999 to set a new expiration date for qualifying patient and caregiver registration identification cards from 2 years to 6 years, require the surrender of a registration card and notification of any registered caregiver when a person no longer requires medical cannabis, and to authorize the Alcoholic Beverage and Cannabis Administration to summarily close an unlicensed retailer; and to amend Title 47 of the District of Columbia Official Code to establish the 4/20 Medical Cannabis Sales Tax Holiday Week for 2024.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “Medical Cannabis Patient Card Extension and 4/20 Medical Cannabis Sales Tax Holiday Week Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2024”.

Sec. 2. (a) To address the burdens associated with becoming a registered medical cannabis patient and provide relief to struggling lawfully operating medical cannabis dispensaries, the Council previously adopted legislation allowing patients with expired registration identification cards to continue purchasing medical cannabis for a short period of time and to require 2-year registration identification cards for new patients.

(b) There remains a need to further reduce the administrative barriers for District residents seeking to access quality medical cannabis and medical cannabis products at licensed dispensaries. There are currently 1,850 District resident patient registrations set to expire during the 3-month period of March 2024 through May 2024. Those residents do not renew their patient registrations due to real or perceived administrative burdens may be inclined to utilize the more than 220 unlicensed cannabis establishments located in the District.

(c) Recent testing by the Metropolitan Police Department at several of these unlicensed establishments uncovered synthetic cannabis for sale that tested positive for amphetamines. Extending the validity of patients’ and caregivers’ registration cards to 6 years, from the current two years, will encourage residents to continue to utilize the District’s licensed dispensaries to purchase medical cannabis and medical cannabis products. Furthermore, extending the length of time that a medical cannabis patient registration identification is valid to 6 years will bring the

District in line with Maryland, which transitioned to a 6-year medical cannabis patient card on September 29, 2022.

(d) Based on ongoing investigations, the Alcoholic Beverage and Cannabis Administration believes there are approximately 200 unlicensed marijuana retailers operating in the District. On March 27, 2024, a robbery and fatal shooting occurred at an unlicensed retail store on Georgia Avenue. The significant clustering of unlicensed marijuana retail stores along commercial corridors presents an ongoing threat to the health and safety of residents, has an adverse impact on the viability and safety of our commercial corridors, and undermines the financial viability of cannabis establishments that are in compliance with District law and regulations. To respond to the threat posed by the unlicensed retailers, ABCA needs clear statutory authority to summarily close those businesses and seize any marijuana contraband.

(e) In February 2022, the Council adopted emergency legislation creating the District's inaugural 4/20 Medical Cannabis Sales Tax Holiday Week. During this tax holiday, medical cannabis patients were exempt from paying the 6% sales tax period for a 10-day period, which included 2 weekends. The holiday was quite successful with consumers and lawfully operating medical cannabis dispensaries in the District. The emergency legislation establishes this successful tax holiday week again in 2024 during the period of April 15, 2024 through April 28, 2024, which would, again, cover two weekends. The popular 4/20 Medical Cannabis Sales Tax Holiday Week is critical to the District's efforts to attract qualifying patients back to the legal market as well as sustain a viable medical cannabis program.

Sec. 3. The Council determines that the circumstances in section 2 constitute emergency circumstances making it necessary that the Medical Cannabis Patient Card Extension and 4/20 Medical Cannabis Sales Tax Holiday Week Emergency Amendment Act of 2024 be adopted after a single reading.

Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.