

Draft rules for Guam medical-pot program to soon go public

April 10 2015

Draft regulations for Guam's new voter-approved medical marijuana program are expected to open to public comment by the end of the month, according to an island health official.

Guam Public Health Department director James Gillan said he will be approving the draft before reviewing it with an advisory board created under the island's marijuana law.

Gillan made his comments Friday to the advisory panel, which met for the first time to discuss ideas for the program, the Pacific Daily News, a Guam newspaper, (is.gd/RVKbTJ) reported.

The draft is primarily based on the medical marijuana law in Arizona, said Gillan, whose agency is overseeing the development of guidelines and regulations. The agency has less than five months to submit rules to Guam lawmakers.

Guam voters in November approved legalizing marijuana for certain medical conditions, including cancer, multiple sclerosis and post-traumatic stress disorder. Guam is the first U.S. territory to legalize medical marijuana.

Gillan's agency is considering allowing three marijuana dispensaries in different parts of the island.

People who attended Friday's informal meeting raised many questions.

Ernest Wusstig, vice president of the Farmers Cooperative Association of Guam, said farmers should establish a marijuana growers association. He also proposed that farmers administer one dispensary.

Also at the meeting was the founder of the Japan Medical Marijuana Association. Tokyo-based Koichi Maeda proposed allowing patients from Japan to go to Guam for medical-marijuana treatments. Maeda said the association has more than 200 members who support legalizing marijuana in Japan.

Gillan had said earlier in the meeting that medical-marijuana tourism was not in compliance with the law and not something he wanted to pursue. The law requires qualified patients to be Guam residents.

Gillan said that after Maeda's comments, however, that it could be a possibility.

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