

# First home delivery of medical marijuana made in Florida

July 23 2016, by Joe Reedy

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The first organization authorized to dispense medical marijuana in Florida has made its first home delivery.

Kim Rivers, CEO of Trulieve, said Saturday that the company has delivered low-THC medical cannabis to a patient in Hudson, Florida, who is suffering from dystonia, a condition characterized by chronic muscle spasms and seizures. Hudson is in Pasco County, near Tampa.

Trulieve and Hackney Nursery, which is the dispensing organization for Northwest Florida, received processing and dispensing authorization from the state Department of Health on Tuesday. Trulieve plans to begin in-store sales at a dispensary in Tallahassee on Tuesday.

Patients suffering from cancer, epilepsy, chronic seizures and chronic muscle spasms can order medical marijuana by contacting their physician, as long as both are listed in a state registry. Department of Health spokeswoman Mara Gambineri said only 15 doctors are currently in the state's registry.

The legislature gave limited approval to medical marijuana in 2014 with many expecting it to be available early in 2015. The process, though, got bogged down by legal challenges and administrative delays.

Christian Bax, director of the Office of Compassionate Use, told the Florida Senate's Regulated Industries subcommittee during a hearing that he expected medical marijuana to be available in September. Some of

the distributing organizations were optimistic that they could have it ready by mid-summer.

Dispensing organizations can do mail delivery throughout the state. Six approved organizations have received cultivation authorization but Trulieve is the only one that has received dispensing authorization. According to an Office of Compassionate Use webinar held last month, dispensaries are expected to be in 18 cities by the time all organizations are up and running.

Trulieve will have medical marijuana initially available in a concentrated oil, tinctures, gel capsules and vape cartridges. By law, the marijuana must be low in tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), which produces the euphoric state for users, but is high in cannabidiol (CBD) which has been effective in preventing seizures.

In March, the legislature approved an extension of the Right to Try law, allowing patients with terminal conditions to receive high-THC cannabis. Rivers said Trulieve expects to have that available next month.

Alpha-Surterra, the dispensing organization for Southwest Florida, completed a harvest of its medical marijuana plants last week and is awaiting dispensing authorization.

The dispensing and delivery of medical marijuana is coming as voters will consider a proposed constitutional amendment legalizing marijuana for medical purposes in November's general election. A similar measure was on the ballot in 2014 and received 58 percent approval, 2 percent shy of what was needed for passage.

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