Maine has allowed prescribing, and limited possession, of medical marijuana since 1999 but the law lacked any distribution mechanism and questions arose of noncompliance with federal law and of how patients could legally obtain the prescribed marijuana. In October the Obama administration announced that it would halt prosecution of medical marijuana users and caregivers if they were in compliance with their state's law [read more]. On November 3, 2009 Maine voters approved Question 5, which enacted the citizen-initiated bill, "An act to establish the Maine Medical Marijuana Act" (LD 975, IB 2). The committee file for LD 975 contains additional information, such as the activity schedule, testimony sign-in sheet, testimony submitted at the public hearing, working papers and memoranda of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, and the committee vote tally sheet. (The contents of the file are not word searchable.)

Maine is the fifth state to provide for dispensaries of medical grade marijuana for persons with debilitating and chronic medical conditions. These not-for-profit dispensaries will be licensed and regulated by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services.

So, when will dispensaries open? Maine election results were verified by the Secretary of State [see tabulations]. Governor Baldacci's press release of November 6, 2009 detailed an executive order which set up a task force chaired by Brenda Harvey, Commissioner of DHHS. On November 17, 2009, the Governor announced the names of the members of the task force. The Task Force issued its report to the Governor on January 27, 2010. The subsequent 2010 enactment of LD 1811, the Governor's bill, paved the way for promulgation of agency rules...
under the Administrative Procedures Act. Emergency rules were adopted on May 5, 2010. Only eight dispensaries (one for each of the eight districts) will be approved the first year. Instructions and applications, as well as the text of the rules, are available on DHHS' Division of Licensing and Regulatory Services webpage.

Local governments are also preparing for implementation of the law. Initially one community enacted a moratorium on the dispensaries. Brewer's city council voted unanimously to ban dispensaries for six months until the state rules and procedures for operating the dispensaries are in place. Since then Auburn, Ellsworth and South Portland have enacted or plan to enact similar moratoriums. For more recent developments see articles linked in the tan column on the right.
Maine’s Medical Marijuana Law

Maine’s first dance
with Mary Jane
8-15-10

Some Mainers object
to California
connection 8-15-10

Dispensaries “starting
to crack the closet
door” 8-15-10

Medical marijuana -
caught Between state
and federal law: what
is an employer to do?
8-13-10

Maine’s medical
marijuana law runs
into federal conflicts
7-13-10

Northeast Patients
Group snags four of
six marijuana
dispensary licenses
7-13-10

Applications to
Operate Maine’s
Medical Marijuana
Dispensaries Pour in
6-25-10

Medicinal marijuana: a
patient-driven
phenomenon 6-14-10

Maine still struggling
with new medical
marijuana rules
6-8-10

Medical pot users:
proposed fees too high
6-8-10

Conference addresses
medical marijuana use
6-6-10

Montel Williams lights
up the Maine Medical
Marijuana Conference
6-6-10

http://www.maine.gov/legis/lawlib/medmarij.html
State opens applications for pot shops 5-7-10

Bangor seeks moratorium on pot dispensaries 5-5-10

The East Coast stumble in legalizing medical marijuana 4-20-10

Maine bill allows 8 marijuana dispensaries 4-6-10

Medical pot deal reached: Legislative panel OKs 8 dispensaries, registration and a state ID card 3-19-10

STATE HOUSE: Growing, distributing medical marijuana at issue 3-18-10

Much work remains for medical marijuana system 3-12-10

Topsham moves closer to moratorium on medical marijuana dispensaries 3-10-10

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