



Editorial Advisory Board: Too much haze around medical marijuana

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Maryland needs to get to the finish line when it comes to providing patients with medical cannabis. It's just not happening. It seems to us that instead of focusing on delivering cannabis to those Maryland residents who would medically benefit from its use, the state has, instead, set upon a path to build cannabis empires for those fortunate enough, for whatever reason, to get the state's awards of what amounts to winning lottery tickets. This includes dispensers, growers and distributors.

No patient with a medical need to use the product has been able to go through Maryland channels to get cannabis. In addition to the delay, the process is mired in other controversy, involving issues of ethics and racial diversity in licensing. As it now stands, what appears to be front and center is who will own and manage the medical cannabis dispensers, distributors and growers – not the patient.

Despite preapproving 15 companies to grow cannabis, 15 companies to process it and 102 companies to distribute it, and the growth of infrastructure, the product has not reached any patients who need it.

If a patient with a headache needed an aspirin, he or she could go to a drugstore and buy a product made in another state or another country. The patient would take it, and the headache would disappear.

Why is the process of providing medical cannabis to Maryland patients who need it so complex, adversarial and unyielding? And why, after all this time, has the product still not been prescribed?

The state needs to serve its citizens. That supposedly was the goal of medical cannabis. Instead, the goal appears to create wealth for those in the distribution system.

Editorial Advisory Board members Arthur F. Fergenson and Caroline Griffin did not participate in this opinion.

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