



San Mateo County Health System (SMCHS) Medical Marijuana Identification Card Program (MMIC) Frequently Asked Questions

What is Proposition 215?

In 1996, California voters passed Proposition 215, also known as the Compassionate Use Act of 1996. It was passed to give seriously ill Californians the right to possess and use marijuana (also known as cannabis) for medical purposes, when they have a recommendation from a physician. It also defines a “primary caregiver” as “the individual who has consistently assumed responsibility for the housing, health, or safety of the medical cannabis user” and gives them the right to cultivate and possess medical cannabis for the patient.

What is the Medical Marijuana Identification Card Program (MMIC)?

The Medical Marijuana Identification Card Program is a program established by the State of California following the passage of SB 420. It requires counties to administer a voluntary card registration program that identifies patients that have the right to possess and use medical marijuana.

What serious medical condition(s) do I need to have to qualify for a MMIC?

A serious medical condition, as defined by [SB 420](#), is any of the following: AIDS; anorexia; arthritis; cachexia (wasting syndrome); cancer; chronic pain; glaucoma; migraine; persistent muscle spasms (i.e., spasms associated with multiple sclerosis); seizures (i.e., epileptic seizures); severe nausea; any other chronic or persistent medical symptom that either substantially limits a person’s ability to conduct one or more of major life activities as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, or if not alleviated, may cause serious harm to the person’s safety, or physical or mental health.

Why should I apply for a MMIC?

Any person in possession of a valid MMIC shall not be subject to arrest for possession, transportation, delivery, or cultivation of medical marijuana in the amount allowed by the State (unless there is reasonable cause to believe that the MMIC is false or falsified, the card was obtained by fraud, or the person is otherwise in violation of SB 420).

How long will it take to get my MMIC?

Once you submit your completed and signed application form with the required documents (proof of residency, medical documentation, etc.) the County of San Mateo Health System (SMCHS) has 30 days to approve or deny your application. If any information or documents are missing, this may delay processing your application. If this is the case, SMCHS will contact you within 30 days from the day you submit your application.

What happens to my application and other private health information after I give it to MMIC county staff?

Your application will be kept confidential and secure. The only release of your application will be with your written permission. This includes appeals of denied applications to the State Medical Marijuana Program. The State Appeals Form contains a declaration and signature block regarding this release.

Where can I obtain marijuana?

The MMIC Program is not authorized to provide information on acquiring Medical Marijuana or related products.

Do I have to be a San Mateo County resident in order to receive a MMIC?

No, any California resident that is a qualified patient can apply for an MMIC; however, you must apply for your MMIC in the county where you reside. Proof of residency is required (i.e. utility bill, DMV registration, etc.)

Can I obtain my recommendation from an out-of-county physician?

Yes. The attending physician must have a license in good standing issued by the Medical Board of California or the Osteopathic Medical Board of California, but there are no residency requirements for the physician.

Is a Medical Marijuana recommendation considered a prescription?

No. To be a prescription, it must be federally approved. As marijuana is not recognized as legal by the federal government, federal law criminalizes the use of medical marijuana.

Is there a fee for applying for an MMIC?

Yes, the current fee is \$98 for each MMIC issued. Proof of eligibility and participation in the Medi-Cal program, presented at the time of application, qualifies a Medi-Cal patient to receive a 50% reduction in fees (\$49). If the patient qualifies for this fee reduction and is designating a primary caregiver, the fee for the primary caregiver's MMIC will also be reduced by 50% (\$49). Once the application is submitted and the verification process begins, the application fees are non-refundable.

Do I need to make an appointment?

No, appointments are not necessary – walk-in clients are welcome.

What do I need to bring to my appointment to make sure my application is complete?

Refer to the application instructions.

Can I have more than one primary caregiver?

Yes, but only if you are a resident of a facility providing medical care and/or supportive services to a qualified patient. He/she can designate no more than three employees as caregivers.

Can a primary caregiver care for more than one patient at a time?

Yes, however, if an individual has been designated as the primary caregiver by two or more qualified patients, the primary caregiver and all the qualified patients must reside in the same city or county.

Can I have a caregiver that lives out of county?

Yes, the primary caregiver must prove California residency and is further restricted to being the primary caregiver for only that patient.

Can I be a primary caregiver for a resident of another county?

Yes, but that will restrict you to being the primary caregiver for only that patient.

Is my MMIC recognized out of county?

Yes, this is a statewide identification program.

Does the San Mateo County Health System issue MMIC's to residents in other counties?

No. In accordance with State regulation, SMCHS can only issue cards to residents of San Mateo County.

Does carrying a valid MMIC protect me from prosecution for possession of marijuana?

No. Possession and distribution of marijuana is a federal offense and individuals in California in possession of marijuana for medical purposes have been prosecuted. In addition, individuals in possession of marijuana in quantities determined by local law enforcement officials to be greater than for personal medical use have been arrested and prosecuted.

What MMIC cardholder personal information will be available to law enforcement?

When the MMIC unique identification number is entered through the MMIC website, a "Valid Card" or "Invalid Card" response is generated. No other information is accessible.

Can a minor apply for a card?

Yes, a minor can apply as a patient or caregiver. If a minor is applying as a qualified patient, they must be lawfully emancipated or of declared self-sufficiency status. If neither, the minor's parent, legal guardian, or person with legal authority to make medical decisions for the minor applicant must complete Section 2 of the Medical Marijuana Program application. Minor's parent or legal guardian must be present at the time of the application. A primary caregiver must be at least 18 years of age, unless the primary caregiver is an emancipated minor or the parent of a minor child who is a qualified patient.

What information will appear on the card?

- Photo of the cardholder
- Designation of “Patient” or “Primary Caregiver”
- A unique user identification number issued by CDHS
- Expiration date
- Name and telephone number of the county that approved the application
- A web-based Internet URL that will enable state and local law enforcement officers, public and others to have immediate access to verify the validity of the card.

How long will a MMIC be valid?

Qualified patient and primary caregiver cards are valid for one year from date of issue. If the primary caregiver card is applied for at a later date than the patient's MMIC, the primary caregiver MMIC will have the same expiration date as the patient's MMIC.

Are medical cannabis users and their primary caregivers required to apply for a MMIC?

Applying for a MMIC is voluntary. San Mateo County Health System offers this program as a service to people who wish to have the convenience of a credit card sized photo ID card that indicates they qualify as a medical marijuana user or primary caregiver under Proposition 215.

What do I need to do to get a new card if my card expires or if it is lost or stolen?

To get a replacement card, you must reapply following the same procedures as applying for a new card. We recommend that you keep a record of the physician's recommendation form/letter so that you can use the original letter to re-apply. You will have to pay the entire amount for a replacement.

What do I do if I am questioned by a police officer about my use of medical marijuana?

Show him/her your MMIC as proof that you qualify for use of medicinal marijuana under Proposition 215.

Where do I go to get an application?

An application can be printed from the Healthy System's webpage by clicking [here](#).

or in person at:

Health System
Office of Vital Statistics
225 37th Ave
San Mateo, CA 94403