



December 16, 2015

FAQs: Oregon Health Authority's Role in Research Related to Medical Marijuana

What is the Oregon Health Authority's (OHA) role in clinical or product research related to cannabis?

OHA's Public Health Division (PHD) administers the Oregon Medical Marijuana Program (OMMP), including issuing medical marijuana cards, and regulating medical marijuana dispensaries. However, OHA does not have a role in conducting clinical or product research related to cannabis.

Why is OHA leading the medical marijuana research group?

[SB 844](#) assigned OHA the responsibility of staffing a [task force](#) on the medical and public health properties of cannabis. This task force will meet just three times, and report their findings to the legislature in February 2016. There is no ongoing role for this task force.

Doesn't PHD do public health research?

PHD routinely engages in public health practice, including recommending and implementing practices supported by evidence developed by independent researchers in academic and clinical settings.

Is PHD ever involved with clinical research?

PHD's involvement in clinical research is governed by specific statutes and is limited to circumstances in which:

- PHD maintains a registry that allows for patients to participate in clinical research conducted by independent researchers (e.g. OSCaR registry, Vital Records); or
- When outcome data available only to PHD are a necessary component of research proposed by independent researchers.

Can I get the names of OMMP cardholders so I can recruit them for my research?

PHD issues medical marijuana cards, but OMMP statute does not allow us to share names of individual patients with any external researchers.

PHD has an Internal Review Board (IRB); doesn't that mean you're doing clinical studies?

PHD has an IRB in place to review studies that involve PHD registries (with statutes that allow us to share names), or studies in which PHD staff or data are involved. The membership of the IRB does not have the expertise to evaluate clinical trials. These types of studies are typically reviewed by the medical centers or clinical facilities that have direct responsibility for treating the patients and for conducting research.

Why can't PHD collaborate with me on my marijuana research?

Though PHD generates many data and policy reports, clinical research does not fall within our expertise and is typically done in medical centers that treat patients. We don't have clinical expertise related to medical marijuana, nor do we have staffing or expertise to evaluate clinical research proposals or routinely collaborate with external researchers involved in clinical or product research.

If PHD is in charge of marijuana dispensaries, can you distribute my research survey to the people who buy marijuana there?

PHD regulates marijuana dispensaries, but we do not use that position to distribute research surveys to clients through dispensaries. Researchers must collect the data themselves by collaborating directly with dispensaries, rather than through us.

How will PHD be involved in retail marijuana research?

PHD may potentially have a role in research into the public health effects of increased retail marijuana sales.