

March 18, 2020

Dear Sen. Arnie Roblan, Rep. Paul Holvey, and other members of the Joint Special Committee on Coronavirus Response,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony about the role of cannabis during the COVID-19 public health emergency. We appreciate your leadership and efforts to help flatten the curve of this pandemic and keep Oregonians safe.

We are Oregon Business Collective (OBC), a coalition of cannabis entities. We work collaboratively to advance policies that protect cannabis consumers and workers.

Cannabis is essential for the wellbeing of tens of thousands of Oregonians, helping them address both physical and mental conditions and disease such as epilepsy, cancer and pain management. Some Oregonians use cannabis medically via a medical marijuana card, but since legalization in 2014, many more use it as medicine without the card through recreational cannabis dispensaries. Cannabis is a crucial therapeutic and medical treatment and OBC members are committed to continuing to dispense cannabis safely and responsibly during this public health emergency.

It is important that people who use legal cannabis products to maintain health continue to have access during the COVID-19 pandemic. If access is denied, many will turn to illicit suppliers who cannot guarantee the safety of their products, thus threatening the wellbeing of customers. Others will seek treatment or prescriptions through the traditional medical health system, which will not be able to accommodate them during this public health emergency. We encourage Oregon to follow the leads of other jurisdictions and keep recreational cannabis dispensaries open to the public as an essential service to ensure access to medicine during the pandemic. Washington and San Francisco have recognized recreational and medical dispensaries are an essential service, and Pennsylvania, Michigan and Illinois – which only allows medical dispensaries – are also keeping dispensaries open.

At OBC, we want to keep Oregonians safe. Traditionally, that has meant ensuring our cannabis products are tested and safe. But like all industries, the cannabis industry has had to quickly pivot to address the COVID-19 pandemic to protect customers and staff. OBC members are rolling out the following social distancing and disinfecting measures in their dispensaries. These are similar to measures taken by pharmacies, and we encourage the state to roll these out to all other dispensaries statewide.

- All employees sanitize hands/change gloves after each interaction with customers and when touching money.
- Employees sanitize displays and customer stations after each transaction, including menus.
- Staff handles menus for customers to avoid any unnecessary contact with surfaces.
- Customers can only touch, smell or hold products after purchase.
- Staff sanitizes and disinfects common areas on a 30-minute schedule (doors, ATMs, touchscreens, display counters, menus, water stations, break rooms, bathrooms).
- Staff leaves floor every 20 minutes to thoroughly wash hands with soap and warm water for a minimum of 30 seconds.

- Staff instructed not to touch their eyes, nose, or mouth at any time.
- Staff instructed not to share any food or drink during this time.
- Gloves are available for all staff to limit unnecessary contact with common spaces and money. Gloves changed frequently and hands sanitized after each transaction.
- Halting recycling programs.
- Customers directed to place online or phone orders to limit in-person contact time.
- Customers over 60 encouraged to place an online or phone order and have someone else pick it up for them, or they may skip the line for faster service to limit their time spent in the store.
- Curbside service will be implemented once approved.
- Registers are six feet away from each other to promote social distancing.
- Tape lines placed throughout showrooms to instruct customers to stand a six-foot distance from others.

OBC members are committed to the safety of its customers and staff. We will take any and all measures possible to ensure health and wellbeing during this crisis while continuing to provide a much-needed service to Oregonians needing cannabis to maintain mental and physical health, and address medical or therapeutic needs. If you have additional suggestions for how we might do that, please let us know. If you have questions about the measures we are taking or the nature of the vital service we are providing, please contact us.

Thank you for your time and dedicated public service.

Signed,

Oregon Business Collective
Andreas Met Halo Labs, Medford
Hunter Neubauer, Oregrown Industries, Bend
William Hill, Williams Wonder Farms, Grants Pass
Carl Carnagey, Juniper Analytics LLC, Bend