

# Marijuana Telehealth, Curbside Pickup Policies Extended In Massachusetts Through 2023

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State cannabis regulators voted last week to keep a trio of pandemic-era policies in place until the end of this year, extending the authorization for telehealth allowances for initial medical marijuana consultations, the ability for medical marijuana dispensaries to sell products curbside, and the ability for cannabis companies to hold virtual community outreach meetings.

Cannabis Control Commission Executive Director Shawn Collins told commissioners that an average of 80 percent of all initial provider visits for first-time medical marijuana patients have been conducted via telehealth since March 2020, the early days of the pandemic. In December 2022, 87 percent of first provider appointments were held virtually, and there are still 13 medical marijuana treatment centers (out of 100 in the state) that offer curbside pick-up for patients.

“By extending these orders on Thursday, Commissioners sent a clear message to Certifying Healthcare Providers, patients, licensees and applicants, and the public that we take their safety seriously,” Collins said. “Staff will continue to monitor the effectiveness of these policies and prioritize protections of all constituents while COVID-19 continues to threaten public health in our state.”

The three policies were extended until Dec. 31, 2023 “or until such time that the agency further modifies the orders,” the

CCC said. The telehealth and virtual community meeting policies were made possible through waivers of the CCC's regulations and curbside pickup was allowed "through an interpretation of the current regulations that allows the curb to be viewed as an extension of the store," the CCC said. Cannabis regulators are preparing to launch a new round of regulatory review that could determine the ultimate fate of the policies.

The CCC said that the telehealth and virtual meeting policies were extended pending that review, but that the curbside operations allowance could be revoked with a vote of the commission at any time. "If written into the Commission's regulations, telehealth consultations for first-time medical patients, curbside pickup operations for MTCs, and virtual community outreach meetings could all become permanent policies," the CCC said.