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Contact: Aaron Nevins, President
Phone- 561-270-0020

Patients and Producers Alliance Files Lawsuit Against the State of Florida for Unconstitutionally Limiting Access for Cannabis Patients

Tallahassee - The Patients & Producers Alliance (PAPA) announced today that it has filed a lawsuit against the Florida Department of Health to even the playing field for producers by ensuring the language and intent of Article X, Section 29 of the Florida Constitution is properly implemented. The lawsuit aims to strike down the laws that are currently limiting consumer choices, access to products, and driving up prices for disabled Floridians and seniors.

PAPA makes two interlocking challenges to the statutory scheme enacted by the legislature in July 2017: The first is that the limited licensing scheme implemented by the legislature is contrary to the text and purpose of the constitution which requires registration not licensing and forbids arbitrary caps on the amount of MMTCs. The second, is that the statute's vertical integration requirement is unconstitutional on its face.

This and other lawsuits caused **State Sen. Jeff Brandes (R-St. Petersburg)** to say that the law must be rewritten. "This law has so many glaring problems," Brandes said. "It just drips with special interests and with crony capitalism."

Irvin Rosenfeld, a federally recognized cannabis patient for over 36 years applauded PAPA's lawsuit. "I have been advocating for cannabis patients for over 3 decades. We have made big steps in Florida for some, but we still have a long way to go to get patients the best cannabis-based medicine at the lowest price. It's an injustice that the State of Florida has monopolized the cannabis industry so that some producers can profit from inflated prices and less competition. They are making money on the backs of patients. This issue is about helping patients and compassion, not lining a few companies' pockets. "

Former Sheriff of Flagler County Jim Manfre agrees that the lawsuit is a step in the right direction for safe access. "In order to transition from the black market, our legitimate operators need to be competitive on price. The best way

to ensure the safe access that voters wanted is to let producers compete in a horizontally regulated open market system.”

Michael Minardi, Vice President of the Alliance, and campaign manager for Regulate Florida said, “It is time we created the system the drafters intended. The one the people voted for and our legislature has denied us. This lawsuit will bring into balance the will of the people and require the legislature to create a system to insure our suffering and dying patients get the access and variety of products at a reasonable cost. They need and deserve life-saving medicine that is unavailable under the current system.”

“The Florida model is a complete disaster,” said **Michael J, Bowen, CEO of the Coalition for a Strong America**. “Epileptics like me need consistent, high quality strains tailored to my needs as a patient, not the arbitrary offering we have now.”

Jordan Huffer, co-founder of Synergy Wellness said, “The voters and patients in need should be outraged. They cant get what they voted for, yet licenses of approved producers are selling to foreign investors for more than \$45 million dollars. How is this helping Floridians get the medicine they voted for and need?”

The Patient and Producers Alliance is represented by Jon Mills and Velvel Freedman of Boies Schiller Flexner. Mills helped draft Amendment 2, and both Mills and Freedman have multiple cases pending against the DOH and the State for their failure to follow Amendment 2 and Florida Statutes.

The Patient and Producers Alliance is a 501c4 not for profit educational advocacy organization whose mission is to help producers, patients, and their physicians gain better knowledge and access to appropriate cannabis treatments. PAPA focuses on educating the public on the restrictions and challenges of accessing medical cannabis, and promoting a horizontally-regulated, free market-based system to ensure appropriate patient access to a broad selection of cannabis-based products.