

Statement from the Commonwealth Dispensary Association on the classification of Adult Use Cannabis [March 23]

We are appreciative of the Administration's inclusion of medical cannabis as an essential service, however, classifying adult use cannabis retailers as non-essential on the grounds that they attract customers from out of state overlooks the relief and comfort these products provide to thousands of Massachusetts residents and the efforts undertaken by the operations themselves.

Although adult use is regulated separately from medical, two-thirds of customers use cannabis for management of medical conditions and symptoms. This loss of access would be akin to losing out on over the counter remedies for many. For others, cannabis provides a small measure of relaxation which can help to ease the anxieties we are all facing during this time, much like a glass of wine to unwind at the end of the day.

Given the highly regulated nature of this industry and its experience with crowd management, these operators are well positioned to operate in the current environment. All have adopted CDC guidance to support safe distancing and minimize interactions and have been enacting them for some time. Operators also have more control over the salesfloor and customer movement in and outside of the store than other businesses.

At a time when municipal and state leaders around the country are telling people to limit their time outside of the home, it should not be expected that out of state customers will patronize retail locations at the same frequency as they would ordinarily.

We ask the Governor and his administration to reconsider the classification of adult use cannabis operators. These businesses provide therapeutic value to thousands of Massachusetts residents as well as vital revenue from taxes that will be more critical than ever in relief efforts.

Statement from the Commonwealth Dispensary Association on the impact of the adult-use shutdown [April 2]

The non-essential designation for adult-use has already had a devastating impact on the industry with 2,000 employees laid off in the midst of a pandemic. That impact will only get worse as the shutdown continues: businesses will close for good and the industry – which was really just gaining a foothold – will be stunted further by a period of inactivity as surviving businesses scramble to replenish their inventory. CultivatED, a cutting-edge social equity program we've been working on with Massachusetts State Representative Chynah Tyler, now finds itself with an uncertain future just as applications opened.

Adult-use cannabis should be allowed to resume operations for a handful of reasons, none the least of which is you'd be hard pressed to find another form of retail better suited for these conditions. That's a product of being a heavily regulated industry. Medical cannabis operators – and adult-use when they were open for business – have implemented social distancing, frequent sanitization of surfaces, online ordering, and other tools to keep interactions at a minimum. Even in less extraordinary times, customers are not allowed to touch products and their movement within the store is fully controlled by employees. We believe these are important distinctions from other businesses that continue to be open, like liquor stores and flower shops.

We see ourselves as a force for good and that is true now more than ever with COVID-19. I am extremely proud of our membership for stepping up to help those on the frontline of this pandemic by producing and donating hand sanitizer to hospitals and providers – free of charge. We can do more good by producing tax revenue for Massachusetts to assist in local and state relief efforts. This industry has brought in more than \$115 million in state and local revenue; if adult-use is reinstated, these funds can go a long way to helping the affected get back on their feet.

While COVID-19 is indiscriminate with its impact on people and businesses, the adult-use cannabis industry is alone in not having any safety net due to the federal classification on cannabis. This is a really important point: there is no recovery money coming to cannabis. Massachusetts is the lone state to differentiate between adult-use and medical cannabis as far as what's essential. We believe that is the wrong stance and the CDA membership is fully willing to adapt their operations, including limiting sales to Massachusetts residents, to address the concerns of State Leadership.

Statement from the Commonwealth Dispensary Association on adult-use lawsuit ruling
[April 16]

While the ruling, which confirmed Gov. Baker's executive authority, was expected, we are encouraged by the judge's acknowledgement that the cannabis industry has several tools at its disposal which would allow adult-use cannabis shops to reopen without harming public health or safety – including limiting sales to Mass. residents, reserve ahead ordering and curbside pickup. The CDA maintains that our industry is well suited to operate in this environment due to the regulations we are held to and we should be allowed to resume. We look forward to continuing the conversation with the Administration around reopening adult-use shops.