



# Office of Cannabis Management

**KATHY HOCHUL**  
Governor

**JOE BELLUCK**  
Cannabis Control Board Chair

**JUNELLA CHIN**  
Cannabis Control Board Vice Chair

**EBRO DARDEN**  
Subcommittee Chair

**PETE SHAFER**  
Subcommittee Chair

**CHRIS ALEXANDER**  
Executive Director

## Meeting Minutes

<b>Title:</b>	New York State Cannabis Advisory Board Meeting
<b>Time &amp; Date:</b>	February 27, 2024 at 1:00 PM
<b>Location:</b>	Office of Cannabis Management, 59 Maiden Lane, 38 <sup>th</sup> Fl., New York, NY 10038 and Virtual via Webcast

## Attendance

<b>Board Chair:</b>	Joe Belluck, Esq.
<b>Board Vice Chair:</b>	Dr. Junella Chin, MD
<b>Board Members Present:</b>	<p><b>Voting Members:</b> Joe Belluck, Esq., Dr. Junella Chin, Allan Gandelman, Garry Johnson, Peter Shafer</p> <p>*Attending virtually from a private location due to extraordinary circumstances: Alejandro Alvarez, Ebro Darden, Nikki Kateman, Chandra Redfern, Armando Rosado</p> <p>Ex Officio Members: Allan Clear, Kathleen DeCataldo (virtual), Patrick Foster, Suzanne Miles-Gustave, Esq. (virtual), Daniel Kaufman-Berson (virtual - designee of DOL)</p>
<b>Board Members Absent:</b>	Dr. Chinazo Cunningham, MD, TheArthur A. Duncan II, Esq., Ruth Hassell-Thompson, Marc Ramirez, Sarah Ravenhall, Scott Wyner, Esq.
<b>Others Present:</b>	Chris Alexander, Damian Fagon, John Kagia

## Agenda

- I. Welcome and Opening Remarks – Joe Belluck, Esq., Chairperson, CAB
- II. Cannabis Industry and Market Report Out, Pete Shafer, Subcommittee Chair
- III. Executive Director Report – Chris Alexander, Executive Director, OCM
- IV. Chief Equity Officer Report – Damian Fagon, Chief Equity Officer, OCM
- V. Industry and Market Report – John Kagia, Senior Policy Director, OCM
- VI. Advisory Board Member Discussion
- VII. Adjourn



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## Notes & Comments

- Chairperson Joe Belluck commented that he continues to work with the Office of Cannabis Management (“OCM” or “the Office”) to increase the capacity of the Cannabis Advisory Board (“CAB”). He further commented that they now have the authority to hire a full-time staff person, and this will continue to increase their ability to provide input to the Cannabis Control Board (“CCB”) and their independence in working with OCM.

- Peter Shafer, Chair of the Cannabis Industry and Market Subcommittee, provided the following overview of the Industry and Market Subcommittee meeting. Topics of discussion included the following:
  - Industry and Market Update
  - Licensing Fees
  - Event Permits
  - PLMA Regulations
  - Transitioning Adult-Use Conditional Cultivators/Processors (“AUCC/AUCP”)
  - Seed to Sale System Updates

- Executive Director Chris Alexander provided the following Executive Director’s report.
  - Licensing Updates
    - The Office received over 6,800 adult-use applications.
    - Applications are sorted into groups based on equity status, provisional status, and license type. The review order is determined through a random process to ensure fairness.
    - The general application review process takes time and includes general eligibility, location review, True Party of Interest review, Social and Economic Equity (“SEE”) review, background checks, and fingerprinting. The NY Business Exchange (“NYBE”) dashboard is updated with real-time updates on an application.
    - The Office has issued over 350 deficiency letters to applicants. Applicants have 30 days from the date of their deficiency letter to cure. This is a regulatory requirement.
    - The CCB approves and awards all adult-use applications. Once your application is approved and the licensing fee has been paid, the Office will issue a license certificate, which includes an official license number. This license number is the authorization to begin legal cannabis activities. The CCB approved 109 final licenses in a previous meeting.



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- Medical Cannabis Program Campaign
  - o The Office launched the State’s first (bilingual) Medical Cannabis Program campaign to bring awareness to an often overlooked and stigmatized form of therapeutic care.
  - o The Office spotlighted the New York State (“NYS”) Medical Cannabis Program’s impact with a series of videos and visual content from three pivotal stakeholders. Distributed across digital platforms and targeted advertising efforts, these assets aimed to inform and inspire a diverse audience.
  - o The campaign, which launched on January 8, 2024, had almost 10,000 new patients join the Medical Cannabis Program from January 10, 2024 to February 16, 2024.
  - o The Office updated the Medical Cannabis Program’s website for greater clarity and easier navigation. Educational materials were developed to outline how to participate in the Medical Cannabis Program, program highlights, and participants rights and protections.
  - o The Office is currently traveling across NYS to deliver in-person presentations to educate the public on the Medical Cannabis Program.

- Damian Fagon, Chief Equity Officer for OCM, provided the following Chief Equity Officer report.
  - Promoting Access
    - o The SEE application was accessible online. The Office provided outreach in advance to prepare and inform applicants of the application process. Technical Assistance Providers (“TAPs”) helped over 800 applicants complete their applications. Due to these supports, the Office received over 6,800 applications.
  - Social and Economic Equity Adult-Use Licensing
    - o Applicants who wish to receive SEE status also completed an application for SEE certification. The Office has begun review on approximately 670 SEE applications with over 200 applicants SEE certified to date.
    - o Applicants who successfully qualify as SEE receive reduced application fees and licensing fees. Extra priority applicants are given extra priority.
    - o Applicants wishing to receive assistance on their corrections process can contact the Office for one-on-one support through a TAP.



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- At the last CCB meeting, 109 adult-use licenses were issued. Two-thirds of those licenses issued were SEE certified, 60% of the microbusiness licenses awarded went to SEE owned businesses, and 88% of adult-use retail dispensary licenses issues were SEE certified.
- Business Development and Support Completed Programs
  - The Conditional Adult-Use Retail Dispensary (“CAURD”) Accelerator, Our Academy, created over \$1.5 million of value for CAURD licensees. More than 60 predatory deals have been avoided for CAURD licensees as a direct result of the Office hours and pro forma support services. Of the currently open CAURD retailers in NY, 34 have engaged with or received technical assistance from Our Academy via the CAURD Accelerator.
  - The Cannabis Compliance Training and Mentorship (“CCTM”) program trained legacy and diverse farmers and processors to prepare for this opportunity. On February 16, 2024, 13 CCTM graduates were issued microbusiness licenses.
- Business Development and Support Upcoming Programs
  - The Cannabis Hub and Incubation Program (“CHIP”) Academy initiative supported AUCC and AUCPs in transitioning to full Adult-Use license types. The issues covered included GMP certification, distressed farmer certification, compliance concerns, minimal processing, microbusiness transitioning, and allowed for 30 minutes (post-training) for live Q&A sessions. The trainings, which started in October 2023 and end in May 2024, provide ongoing support focused on distressed farmers and SEE growers and processors across the state. The classes will be hosted by SUNY Morrisville. The trainings will be recorded and will live in the SUNY Morrisville’s online training platform for all subsequent licensees to view in the coming year.
- Workforce Development
  - The cannabis industry has created 3,500 - 4,500 full time employment opportunities and is working towards a goal of 60,000 new jobs.
  - The SUNY Cannabis Task Force was created to help prepare students for jobs in the emerging cannabis market. The taskforce includes representatives from the Legislature, state agencies, SUNY campuses, labor, and businesses.



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- Three SUNY campuses have received \$1 million each from Governor Kathy Hochul to support the creation or enhancement of short-term credential programs that provided pathways to employment in the cannabis industry. Fifteen SUNY campuses offer courses related to cannabis hemp.
- Budtender Bootcamp – Our Academy has trained 80 budtenders thus far, many of which are currently employed at NYS dispensaries. In addition to cannabis and product related training, the bootcamp focuses on management and conflict resolution training leading to a retention rate of 96.25% for Our Academy trained budtenders.

- John Kagia, Senior Policy Director for OCM, provided the following Industry and Market report.
  - Market Update
    - There are 75 retail dispensaries now open across NYS.
    - Over \$183 million in legal cannabis has been sold to date.
    - Cannabis Grower Showcases (“CGS”) generated \$9.2 million in sales.
    - There are nearly 600 unique strains currently available in NY and over 250 brands in the market.
  - Licensing Application Summary
    - The highest proportion of SEE applicants were Minority and Women Owned Businesses.
    - The Office received a total of 6,877 applications.

- CAB members were provided the opportunity to have a member discussion.
- Board Member Ebro Darden asked if Registered Organizations (“ROs”) would pay \$20 million in total to the State, starting with \$5 million to become a licensee in the State as they extend opportunities for ROs. He also asked if there was a way to monitor, and over what time period should they reach the \$20 million mark per RO.
- Executive Director Chris Alexander responded that’s correct and that four of their existing medical operators have paid the fee and opened up retail operations for a total of \$20 million from those four that are operating. He commented that the next \$5 million is due 180 days after the second and third opening.
- Board Member Ebro Darden asked if there was a way for them to study the revenues or access to business building for first to market versus people who come into the market later on so that they can help provide insight for licensees that are coming into the market later and help manage their expectations as well as their business.



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- Executive Director Chris Alexander commented that they are doing as much as possible to ensure that everybody has access to the market information that they are collecting.
  - Board Member Garry Johnson asked if they have data on the spend that is going into the stores in terms of their development, and how much participation there is or isn't in terms of professionals who are assisting their growers and their retail organizations.
  - John Kagia commented that they don't have great data yet on the buildout of the market from the ancillary supports ecosystem and that they are working on some interesting and collaborative work with DOL around employment.
  - Board Member Garry Johnson commented that they want to make sure that people that are opening these establishments are being as equally supportive of professionals who have the skill sets to get it done, and not necessarily going outside their communities to do it if they don't have to. He further commented that they have communities developed by people who are not from the communities, and then the professionals of the industries from those communities don't benefit from the buildouts.
  - Damian Fagon commented that in order to get your license renewed by any retailer, any license in the market, you have to have the SEE impact plan.
  - Chair Belluck asked if they could get a presentation and update on the community impact list at the next CAB meeting.
  - Executive Director Chris Alexander responded yes.
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- The CAB adjourned the meeting.