

# NEWS...



*From The Office of State Representative Kelly Cassidy*

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## **Medical Cannabis Pilot Program: Paper Application Updates**

**CHICAGO** – State Rep. Kelly Cassidy, D-Chicago, is announcing the option for paper applicants of the Medical Cannabis Pilot Program (MCP), provisional access to the program. The language creating the provisional access component for MCP applicants is limited to online applicants solely based on the way the system had to be built by the Department of Public Health (IDPH). When paper applications are sent in to the IDPH, a relatively small staff has to manually enter and scan the information to begin the processing of the application, making it difficult to implement anything like the provisional card process.

The Department reports that between December 1, 2018, the day the rules allowing provisional access went into effect and January 31, 2019, they received 2200 MCP applications - a huge amount compared to other months. Currently IDPH is halfway through processing November, 2018 applications, therefore processing times for December applications are still a few weeks out with January applications taking even longer. The staff at IDPH, understanding the effects of not allowing paper applicants provisional access have been incredibly cooperative and transparent in the challenges they have been facing, agreed to offer a temporary solution for paper applications who applied in this time frame.

Individuals who sent in a paper application after December 1, 2018 may gain provisional access to the program by reapplying through the online system and paying the fee with a credit card. The Department will check each paper application against the system before processing payments as they work through December and January applications. As they find duplicate paper applications, they will destroy or return the original form of payment.

“This is not a perfect solution, but given the limitations of staffing and the constraints of the processing system, I am very pleased with the solution the Department of Public Health has offered for paper applicants” Representative Cassidy stated.

Moving forward, the Department has agreed to add highly visible language to the paper application materials and their website, warning patients that the only way to gain provisional access is via online application.

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