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Washington CannaBusiness Association to Launch New Fund for Patient Access

WACA also announces Code of Conduct for members establishing association commitments to safety, citizenship and to be good neighbors

WASHINGTON – Today the Washington CannaBusiness Association (WACA) formally announced a new effort to expand patient access to medical marijuana, as well as a Code of Conduct for all members to help support cannabis businesses' leadership in their communities. The Code of Conduct is based on similar standards of practice in analogous regulated industries in Washington State. Today's announcements follow the association's successful Fall Conference in Tacoma that saw regulators, elected officials, industry experts and license holders discuss the successes and ongoing challenges of Washington's legal cannabis marketplace.

"I applaud our state's licensed cannabis producers, processors and retailers for moving forward with a plan to help reduce economic barriers for patients accessing medicine prescribed to them by a health care professional," said **State Senator Ann Rivers, a prime sponsor of the 2015 Cannabis Patient Protection Act**. "I have heard from many patients who are concerned that their medicine is out-of-reach due to personal economic hardship. I am encouraged that our state's business leaders are stepping forward to help and I will continue to work in Olympia to support a safe marketplace that keeps marijuana away from kids but allows the legal industry to grow and prosper while continuing to diminish the illegal, unregulated black market."

"For many patients, medical cannabis has offered relief when conventional pharmaceuticals have failed, but the cost for a safe and consistent supply of medicine can be well out of reach for many," said **Ryan Day, patient advocate and supporter of the Cannabis Patient Protection Act**. "As the father of a medical marijuana patient, I am heartened by the cannabis businesses who want to ensure that economic barriers don't prevent patients from getting the medicine that they need. Our regulated system in Washington helps ensure that products sold are safe and quality-controlled. Now those businesses will also help ensure that the patients are not forced to buy cheaper but questionable products off the street."

Medical Access Fund

WACA's Board of Directors is moving forward with plans to establish a charitable fund to lower financial barriers for registered patients in Washington State. Qualifying patients will be encouraged to apply for financial support to help defray the costs of medical products. Due to the legal and regulatory landscape of Washington's still young legal marijuana marketplace, additional details concerning the fund are currently being finalized with the goal of the fund becoming operational by the end of 2016.

"Our members strongly support a safe, quality-controlled and fully regulated marketplace for all cannabis products," said WACA Executive Director Vicki Christophersen. "That's why we are determined to address the challenges some face who, due to economic hardship, are not able to access the medicine they have been prescribed by a medical professional. Under current state laws and regulations, as well as the economic realities of the marketplace, it is difficult to provide medical products at no cost to patients. WACA's Board of Directors wanted to establish the Medical Access Fund to create a legal, regulated process whereby our members and their peers in the licensed industry can step up and support patients. Whether they are a licensed producer, processor or retailer, all of our members are committed to helping serve the communities in which we do business."

WACA Code of Conduct

The WACA Code of Conduct codifies WACA's professional and community values and demonstrates the standards upon which WACA policy positions, community outreach and member relations are based. The Code of Conduct is based on six key pillars:

- Social Responsibility
- Clean Cannabis
- A Fully-Regulated System
- Responsible Consumption
- Community Relations
- Internal Compliance

The full text of the Code of Conduct is available on the association's website.

"We are proud of our state's leadership in supporting a legal cannabis marketplace, but we are also conscious that many view our new industry with skepticism," **said Christophersen.** "In order to help demonstrate our members' commitment to a safe and regulated marketplace that keeps cannabis out of the hands of kids, we have launched a Code of Conduct to share our values and standards of practice so that we can help demonstrate our commitment to responsible business practices. In forming our Code of Conduct, our members engaged in a deep discussion about how we think our unique and new industry can be productive and valued business leaders in the communities where they operate. By modeling the standards for our Code of Conduct to other regulated industries, our members hope that we can prove over time that licensed, regulated business professionals like those that comprise the legal cannabis marketplace uphold the same values which all Washingtonians share."

About Washington CannaBusiness Association

Washington CannaBusiness Association solely represents Washington's licensed and regulated cannabis businesses and provides its members with general support and representation before regulatory agencies and the legislature. As an association of cannabis producers, processors and retailers who have gathered to promote the private cannabis industry created by Initiative 502 and our member companies, our mission is to advocate on behalf of our member companies in the legislative, regulatory, legal and public policy arenas.

Learn more about Washington CannaBusiness Association by visiting our website at <http://www.wacannabusiness.org>

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