

# (Updated) State Approves Medical Marijuana Production For Simsbury Site

 patch.com/connecticut/simsbury/simsbury-site-chosen-for-medical-marijuana-production

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With the state's approval of Curaleaf, LLC as one of four medical marijuana producers in Connecticut, company officials said they are looking forward to providing relief to patients and getting a Simsbury facility up and running in the next several months.

"We feel honored to have been selected and also feel a great responsibility to qualifying patients to get our product on the shelves as soon as possible in order to provide them with the option of pure, high quality medical cannabis," said Farmington resident April Arrasate, co-founder and Chief Operational Officer for Curaleaf. "We are confident that we can implement our organic cultivation methods and state of the art extraction methods swiftly and efficiently such that we can have a wide array of pharmaceuticals, including capsules, concentrates, topicals, vaporization cartridges, sublingual wafers, and raw material available to patients by the summer."

Tuesday morning Consumer Protection Commissioner William M. Rubenstein, joined by Gov. Dannel P. Malloy, Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman and other officials, announced that through a competitive process, four of 16 applicants had been chosen as the first-ever producers of medical marijuana to serve the needs of seriously ill patients in Connecticut.

In addition to Curaleaf were:

- Advanced Grow Labs, LLC — facility to be located in West Haven
- Connecticut Pharmaceutical Solutions, LLC -- facility to be located in Portland
- Theraplant, LLC -- facility to be located in Watertown

First Selectman Mary Glassman said the announcement of Curaleaf's approval was good economic news for the town.

"We are grateful to the governor and the Consumer Protection committee for selecting Simsbury as one of four sites in Connecticut for the medical pharmaceutical facility," Glassman said. "The facility will reinvigorate an underutilized industry building and bring additional tax dollars to our community."

By a [4-2 vote in December](#), the Simsbury Zoning Commission approved the use of 100 Grist Mill Road in Simsbury for Curaleaf's production facility.

During a public hearing portion of that meeting, Dwight H. Merriam of Robinson & Cole gave a power point presentation in which he talked about many aspects of the building. He talked about the state's stringent security requirements inside and out, the plan for climb-resistant yet aesthetically pleasing fencing, 24-7 security the site's natural screening and low visibility.

No one from the public spoke against the proposal at a public hearing but commissioner William J. Fiske strongly opposed the idea, saying marijuana is the most sought after illicit drug in the U.S. He also said security could break down and employees could succumb to temptation.

"This does not need to be part of Simsbury," Fiske said at the meeting.

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Since then two residents Robert H. Kalechman and Joan Coe have decried the idea to the Board of Selectmen.

However, Curaleaf President Eileen Konieczny, a 20-year oncology nurse, board member of the American Cannabis Nurses Association and former executive director of the Connecticut Cannabis Business Alliance, spoke strongly about what she said are numerous benefits of the traditional medicine when she appeared before the Simsbury Zoning Commission in early October.

“When you see that medical cannabis can probably change the world, you don’t stop talking,” Konieczny she said at that past Simsbury Zoning Commission meeting.

In a [November Patch article](#), Arrasate shared more about the company’s philosophy.

Others in the company include Chief Executive Officer Robert Birnbaum of Greenwich and Compliance officer Joseph Stevens, founder of Greenleaf Compassion Center, the only operational medical marijuana alternative treatment center in New Jersey.

As required, each of the four businesses now must establish escrow arrangements in the amount of \$2 million, and pay their annual license fee, at which time their operating license will be issued by the Department. Producers must be operational within 180 days of licensure.

The Department’s Request for Applications announced that the award of three producer licenses was anticipated, but as noted the RFA the department had the option to award.

During its evaluation, according to a submitted release, the Department took into account a variety of factors – including the applicants’ expectations of initial and long-term patient demand, initial and phased expansion of production capacities, production roll-out timetables and anticipated product mixes — and determined that patients would be better assured a reliable and steady source of pharmaceutical grade marijuana by licensing four producers.

Selection of the growing operations is a major step in the implementation of Connecticut General Statutes Chapter 420f, which provides for the palliative use of marijuana for patients suffering from one of 11 specific debilitating illnesses, whose doctors believe that such treatment is appropriate.

Since passage of the 2012 legislation, the Department has implemented an online patient, physician and caregiver registration system, sought and acquired passage of detailed regulations to implement the program’s operation, and launched the competitive selection process for the state’s medical marijuana production and dispensing system.

Companies were chosen on a competitive basis after a detailed and thorough review of the applications submitted by 16 applicants hoping to be awarded these licenses. The applications, each containing 700 to more than 1,000 pages, provided detailed information about applicants’ financial ability, relevant experience, location and site plan, and production, security, safety, business and marketing protocols. Applications also included any plans to enhance the working environment of employees, provide a compassionate need program, engage in or fund scientific research, give back to the community, prevent substance abuse and operate in environmentally beneficial ways.

With the producers now selected, the Department will continue its competitive selection process for the state’s first medical marijuana dispensary facility licenses. Between three and five of these licenses are expected to be awarded within the next two months.

[CT News Junkie reports](#) that 1,684 patients are certified to use medical marijuana.

"We look forward to working with the town of Simsbury, the Department of Consumer Protection and the state of Connecticut to provide safe access to patients and ease some of the suffering associated with their qualifying ailments," said Arrasate, 1995 graduate of Farmington High School and former co-owner of The Flea Circus in Collinsville.