

# Obama administration: Keep medicinal pot grows small, controlled

By Susan K. Livio, Star-Ledger

TRENTON – State medical marijuana programs and the people who work for them are not likely to run afoul of federal law if they keep their operations small and controlled, and don't allow growers to create "industrial marijuana cultivation centers," according to an eagerly-awaited letter from the Obama administration.

The letter, obtained by the Star-Ledger Thursday evening, comes more than two months after state Attorney General Paula Dow asked the Obama administration whether New Jersey's future medical marijuana program could violate federal law.

Gov. Chris Christie has said he would delay the program until the federal government assures him it won't prosecute anyone employed by the program. Possession and distribution of marijuana is a federal crime, even though 16 states have passed laws making it available to select patients.

In 2009, the Obama administration issued a memo saying it would not devote law enforcement time and money to arresting and prosecuting people involved in legitimate medical marijuana activities. But subsequent memos issued in April seemed to suggest federal law enforcement was not willing to give a blanket immunity to such programs.

U.S. Attorney Paul Fishman sent the letter to Dow Thursday evening. A spokesman for Dow could not immediately be reached for comment.

**Read the whole story**