

Nev. won't make deadline for pot dispensaries

By AP

State officials say they will miss the Nevada Legislature's April 1 deadline to begin accepting applications from medical marijuana providers and growers.

Marla McDade Williams of the state Health Division said regulations must be approved before the agency can accept applications.

Williams, who will manage the program for the Health Division, said she doubts the state will license facilities to provide patients with medical marijuana until September or October.

After the division writes the regulations, they must be approved by the state Board of Health and the Legislative Commission. They also must be reviewed by the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

Once the regulations win approval, Williams said, applicants have 30 days to submit paperwork to become a cultivator; manufacturer of marijuana-based products such as edibles; testing lab; or dispensary. The state then has a 90-day period to review applications.

Although Nevada voters approved a constitutional amendment allowing medical marijuana in 2000, patients had no legal way to obtain the drug.

The Legislature earlier this year established a regulated system for dispensing medical marijuana to patients with a state-issued card. The law sets up a taxing, regulatory and distribution system for medicinal pot. The law also authorizes one pot dispensary in each of Nevada's 14 rural counties, with

up to 40 allowed in Clark County, 10 in Washoe and two in Carson City.

The Health Division is tasked with adopting regulations and implementing the law that was supposed to take effect April 1.

Williams provided an update during a hearing last week in Carson City to review proposed regulations.

Several lawyers representing potential applicants said it would be difficult to comply with some of the rules.

The audit requirements are particularly onerous, said Patrick McDonnell of the law firm Rainey & Devine. A rule requiring a full accredited audit every year could cost businesses from \$25,000 to \$50,000, he said.