

State Approves PTSD to List of Conditions Approved for Treatment with Medical Marijuana

PROVIDENCE – Recently passed legislation and signed into law adds post-traumatic stress disorder to the list of conditions that may be treated with medical marijuana.

The law (2016-S 2115, 2016-H 7142) adds post-traumatic stress disorder to the definition of “debilitating medical condition” for purposes of qualifying for medical marijuana in the Edward O. Hawkins and Thomas C. Slater Medical Marijuana Act.

According to a report from the Veterans Administration, nearly 30 percent of veterans who served in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars suffer from PTSD. Some scientists have suggested that marijuana may help PTSD symptoms, which can include anxiety, flashbacks and depression. In a recent study, patients who smoked cannabis saw an average 75 percent reduction in PTSD symptoms.

The law also accelerates the issuance of an approved medical marijuana use application if the patient is eligible for hospice care. It requires the Department of Health to issue a registry identification card to the qualifying patient and primary caregivers named in the patient’s application within 72 hours of receipt of the completed application.

According to the Department of Health, more than 10,000 people in Rhode Island carry medical marijuana cards to treat an approved list of conditions, including cancer, glaucoma, AIDS, hepatitis C, Crohn’s disease and Alzheimer’s, among others. ♦

First Patient at Kent Receives Subcutaneous Defibrillator System (S-ICD)

WARWICK – Kent Hospital announced recently the successful implantation of its first subcutaneous defibrillator (S-ICD) system for the treatment of patients at risk for sudden cardiac arrest (SCA).

The procedure was performed by **BRUCE A. KOPLAN, MD, MPH**, director of the Cardiac Arrhythmia Service for Care New England. Dr. Koplan, part of Brigham and Women’s Cardiovascular Associates at Care New England, is also the first physician in New England to implant the same device in a patient previously at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston.

Said Dr. Koplan, “As clinical technology continues to advance it allows us to provide our patients with excellent options that are best suited to their specific needs while also improving upon safety and long-term results. The first implant of this lifesaving device here continues to show Kent and Care New England’s ongoing commitment to providing the best possible cardiac care closer to home.”

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) granted regulatory approval for the latest S-ICD system in March 2015. ♦



A groundbreaking for a new intensive care unit at the Providence VA Medical Center was held July 22. In attendance were U.S. Sen. Jack Reed; U.S. Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse; U.S. Rep. James Langevin; Providence VA Medical Center Director Dr. Susan A. MacKenzie; and Retired Gen. Rick Baccus, Rhode Island Office of Veterans Affairs.

The new 10,000 square foot ICU, which is expected to be completed July 2017, will provide state-of-the-art equipment, a location adjacent to the surgical suite, and additional space for patients and staff. The facility will incorporate nine inpatient care units, modern nurse stations, modern consultation rooms and adequate family space.