



Medical Marijuana in New York: The First Upper East Side Doctor to Prescribe Medical Marijuana Overcomes Misconceptions & Helps Ailing Patients

Since mid-January 2016, Dr. Thomas O'Brien has assisted over 200 patients suffering a range of serious illnesses achieve medical marijuana certification and treatment plans, yielding positive results. For more details on New York medical marijuana evaluation, certification and educational information, visit DocTommy.com

New York, NY, March 16, 2016 -- On January 16, 2016, New York physician [Dr. Thomas O'Brien](#) secured certification for his first patient to be prescribed medical marijuana, just after the program launched and the first eight dispensaries in the state opened on January 7. Dr. O'Brien has since assisted over 200 patients achieve certification for medical marijuana in New York in the last 90 days with positive results and feedback from individuals suffering from brain cancer, lung cancer, pancreatic cancer, multiple sclerosis, irritable bowel disease, HIV, ALS and neuropathies.

Dr. O'Brien believes obtaining his physician certification as a medical marijuana doctor with the New York State Department of Health's Medical Marijuana Program was the natural progression in his practice of medicine. O'Brien, who has been in practice for 18 years, is board certified in Integrated Medicine and holds a Masters degree in Clinical Nutrition. He began his career as a family physician and treated patients for Acute Care and Continuous Care. In caring for more severely ill patients, his focus grew to Compassionate Care and Palliative Care. He is one of seven Manhattan doctors with M-MJP certification, with just 28 New York State doctors presently listed on the web site MarijuanaDoctors.com. However, the New York State Department of Health web site notes that as of March 2, 445 physicians have registered and 1,399 patients have been certified for treatment, yet the department still lacks a comprehensive practitioner list to allow prospective patients to find care.

Currently, under New York State's Medical Marijuana Law (S7923/A6357-E) [specific requirements](#) must be met and patients are potentially eligible for medical cannabis if they have been diagnosed with a specific severe, debilitating or life threatening condition accompanied by an associated or complicating condition. By law, those conditions are: cancer, HIV infection or AIDS, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injury with spasticity, epilepsy, inflammatory bowel disease, neuropathy, and Huntington's disease. The associated or complicating conditions are cachexia or wasting syndrome, severe or chronic pain, severe nausea, seizures, or severe or persistent muscle spasms.

"My primary focus is to alleviate symptoms so my patients may perform daily functions relatively symptom free," explains Dr. O'Brien. "For those patients who have exhausted traditional therapies and are at end of life, my focus is to make them comfortable so that they may have quality of life to spend with their families for whatever time remains."

Placing a strong emphasis on education, Dr. O'Brien spends significant time with each patient so that they thoroughly understand the certification process, doses, and benefits. "Doc Tommy," as he is known to his patients, creates an open, non-rushed environment where patients and family members can comfortably ask questions and discuss all concerns. "My mission is to educate our community on the benefits of medical marijuana," the doctor explains. In consulting with his patients, O'Brien learned that a significant number of them had self-medicated with street marijuana, already realizing the benefits.



“The legalization of medical marijuana now takes procurement off the streets where the substance contains a much higher ratio of THC, resulting in unwanted psychoactive side effects. It can also be laced with other contaminants. Now I am able to offer seriously ill or end of life patients, a legal, safe, reliable alternative, cultivated in a controlled environment with no added chemicals,” explains O’Brien. The biggest challenge for the doctor has been creating awareness with New York City residents that his services are a viable and effective option to traditional therapies that have failed to provide relief for patients in the past. “The greatest misconception regarding medical marijuana is that people believe patients will walk the streets high,” he notes. Medical marijuana also removes the need to smoke the substance with calculated dosages available in vapor, sublingual and pill forms, depending upon the ailment.

In continuously monitoring patients beginning with their first follow up one month after commencing marijuana therapy, the doctor has seen promising results with many patients living more comfortably than they had in years. He is hopeful that New York State will expand the scope of diagnosis covered by the Compassionate Care Act so that more individuals can benefit from medical marijuana.

Dr. Thomas O’Brien’s office is located at 121 East 60th Street in Manhattan. As with all M-MJP certified practitioners, health insurance does not cover this area of care. Fees vary from physician to physician and Dr. O’Brien’s rates have been reduced to make care more accessible. As a former Captain and Commanding Officer in the New York Guard’s, 88th Brigade, 102 Forward Support Medical Detachment, Dr. O’Brien offers further reduced rates to those having served in any branch of the US Armed Forces.

For more information on obtaining patient medical marijuana certification and learning more about the benefits of treatment, individuals with eligible conditions may visit DocTommy.com or call (212) 201-9122.

— *Prepared by K. Shoob*

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