



David Guhin
Director Planning and Economic Development
City of Santa Rosa
100 Santa Rosa Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Dear Director Guhin,

I am writing in response to questions raised by City of Santa Rosa staff about the role of the County's Health Department in enforcing food safety rules related to cannabis. I understand that the City of Santa Rosa is developing a process for permitting of commercial medical cannabis activities, and wanted to bring to your attention one specific area of the new Medical Marijuana Safety and Regulation Act.

The new law defines "edible cannabis products" to be neither a "food as defined by Section 109935 of Health and Safety Code or a drug as defined by Section 109925 of the Health and Safety Code." As a result, our existing health and safety code regulations and our standardized processes for ensuring safety of food products do not apply. For example, there are no processes in place for inspection of the production or sale of "edible cannabis products" nor are there requirements that businesses follow hygiene and safety standards. This is particularly concerning for the production of high-risk edible products such as those that require time-temperature controls to prevent growth of pathogenic microorganisms or productions of toxins.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has been charged with creating regulations for manufacturing and testing of marijuana products but will not complete this process until the middle or end of 2017. These regulations may or may not address the full array of "edible cannabis products" and will likely not address management of "edible cannabis products" in dispensaries.

Until such a time as the CDPH regulations are in place, unless local jurisdictions create their own standards for manufacturing and retail/dispensing of "edible cannabis products" there will be a gap where there are no inspections or other preventive actions to ensure "edible cannabis product" safety. As part of the County's Marijuana Technical Advisory Committee, our Department of Health Services has been investigating ways that local jurisdictions could fill this gap, and plan to bring a proposed program before the Board of Supervisors prior to the end of the calendar year.

The County would be happy to continue to work with you as you develop your comprehensive medical cannabis policies to provide information on health and safety concerns, including management of "edible cannabis products." Please feel free to contact me if you'd like to discuss further.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen Milman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Karen Milman
Sonoma County Health Officer