

MEDICAL MARIJUANA RECALL WARRANTS GREATER OMMU DISCLOSURE



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The Florida Department of Health's Office of Medicaid Marijuana Use ordered the Florida medical-marijuana company Alpha Foliage, Inc. to recall a product that was dispensed to patients in July of 2020 due to a mold fungus. Alpha Foliage, which does business as Surterra Wellness, was ordered to recall the product, *Granddaddy Purple Whole Flower*, due to high levels of *Aspergillus*, a common indoor and outdoor mold. The state also ordered the company to notify all patients who received it.

A review of state records maintained by OMMU shows that during the week of August 7-13, 2020, Surterra Wellness operated 39 dispensaries across Florida, dispensing just under 450 ounces of medical marijuana in non-smokable form, and approximately 4,835 ounces of smokable whole flower medical marijuana. Surterra Wellness currently is the second-largest medical marijuana licensee in Florida, following only Trulieve Cannabis Corp., which currently maintains 56 dispensing locations across Florida.

However, nowhere on the OMMU's Website is there any reference to the Alpha Foliage, Inc. recall, nor to other medical marijuana product recalls reportedly occurring in Florida over the past several weeks. In fact, no mention is made anywhere on the OMMU Website regarding product recalls, or withdrawals of cannabis products from the market.

While *Aspergillus* is a common type of mold, people with weakened immune systems or lung diseases who breathe it in can develop *Aspergillosis*, a fungal infection that can cause allergic reactions, lung infections and infections in other organs and even blood vessels. Public awareness of health concerns related to toxic or adulterated medical marijuana products should be a high priority for the OMMU.

As of August 21, 2020, Florida had licensed 22 Medical Marijuana Treatment Center (MMTC) licensees, although only 13 are operating dispensaries that have reported actual medical marijuana sales as of that date. The OMMU currently has approved 399,253 qualified medical marijuana patients, and 2,573 qualified physicians.

For the benefit of medical marijuana qualified physicians and all of their patients, as well as the public at large, information regarding medical marijuana product recalls or withdrawals from the market should be published and accessible on the OMMU Website.