Nation's First Master's Program in Medical Cannabis

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The University of Maryland School of Pharmacy (UMSOP) has launched a new **Master of Science (MS) in Medical Cannabis Science and Therapeutics** to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to support patients and the medical cannabis industry, add to existing research in the field, and develop well-informed medical cannabis policy. Based at the Universities at Shady Grove (USG) in Rockville, Md., the two-year program blends online learning with face-to-face experiences, and is designed for any individual who has completed his or her undergraduate degree and is interested in pursuing a career in the medical cannabis industry.

School of Pharmacy offers a master's degree in medical cannabis science and therapeutics.

The MS in Medical Cannabis Science and Therapeutics is the first graduate program in the country dedicated to the study of medical cannabis. It aims to meet the needs of all individuals interested in advancing their knowledge about medical cannabis, including health care professionals such as physicians, nurses, and pharmacists; scientists and regulators; growers and dispensary owners; and policy and industry professionals.

“Medical cannabis has been legalized in 33 states, including Maryland, as well as in Washington, D.C., Guam, and Puerto Rico,” says **Natalie D. Eddington, PhD, FCP, FAAPS**, dean and professor at UMSOP. “This number is only expected to increase in the future, fueling a demand for an educated workforce that is well-trained in both the science and therapeutic effects associated with this medicinal plant. Our MS in Medical Cannabis Science and Therapeutics has been critically designed to prepare students to meet this demand. Innovations in instructional design throughout the curriculum will provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to make a positive impact on communities across the United States."

The School of Pharmacy’s MS in Medical Cannabis Science and Therapeutics addresses the areas of basic science, clinical use, adverse effects and public health, and federal and state laws and policies surrounding medical cannabis. Online coursework is designed to accommodate students with or without a background in science or medicine, as well as offer flexibility when completing assignments. In-person symposia held once each semester at USG provide students with

opportunities to network with peers, as well as meet and interact with experts in the science, therapeutics, and policy of medical cannabis.

The application deadline for this program is August 15, for classes beginning on August 26, 2019.

“The MS in Medical Cannabis Science and Therapeutics is an incredibly unique program,” says **Leah Sera, PharmD, MA, BCPS**, assistant professor in the Department of Pharmacy Practice and Science at UMSOP,

director of the MS in Medical Cannabis Science and Therapeutics program, and a clinical pharmacist who practices in the field of palliative care. “Faculty from the School of Pharmacy who lead courses for the program are experts in both basic and clinical sciences related to the study of medications, and are dedicated to making coursework both interesting and accessible to all students.”

She adds, “There is truly no other educational program that offers the in-depth instruction on the science, policy, and therapeutics of medical cannabis that students who are accepted into our program will receive.”

To better meet the needs of working professionals, the MS in Medical Cannabis Science and Therapeutics does not require the completion of a thesis. Instead, students complete a capstone course that features a selection of expert seminars, case studies, and discussions. Graduates of the program will be able to help identify patients appropriate for medical cannabis therapy and determine appropriate dosing and administration for those patients; ensure the safe and effective design, development, and manufacture of medical cannabis products; identify potential research opportunities related to the science and health effects of the cannabinoids found in medical cannabis; and participate in health policy decision-making processes related to medical cannabis.

“Students who complete our program will have an unparalleled competitive advantage when it comes to pursuing or advancing a career in the medical cannabis industry,” says Sera. “These individuals will be well-prepared to support patients and the medical cannabis industry with the knowledge and skills gained from their coursework. They will also be able to add to existing clinical and scientific research on medical cannabis, and will be able to contribute to well-informed policies related to medical cannabis.”

The MS in Medical Cannabis Science and Therapeutics welcomes students who possess a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university, currently work or are interested in working in the medical cannabis industry, and have the ability to travel once per semester to attend required symposia at USG, which is located in a suburb of the nation’s capital.

To learn more about the program, visit https://www.pharmacy.umaryland.edu/academics/ms-medical-cannabis-science-and-therapeutics/ or view the short video below at https://youtu.be/kIUs8piKXLM.

About the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy

Established in 1841, the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy is ranked as one of the top ten schools of pharmacy in the United States. The School is a thriving center for professional and graduate education, pharmaceutical care, research, and community service. Its faculty create the future of pharmacy by pioneering new roles for pharmacists in advanced clinical practice and conducting cutting-edge research in drug discovery and development, comparative effectiveness and patient-centered outcomes, and disease management. A contemporary curriculum, innovative educational experiences, and strategic professional relationships help to inspire excellence in the School’s more than 800 students, residents, and postdoctoral fellows. Together, we are critical thinkers, lifelong learners, and leaders who are sought for our expertise.

About the University of Maryland, Baltimore

Founded in 1807, the University of Maryland, Baltimore is Maryland's only public health, law, and human services university, dedicated to excellence in education, research, clinical care, and public service. UMB enrolls more than 6,700 students in six nationally ranked professional schools — medicine, law, dentistry, pharmacy, nursing, and social work — and an interdisciplinary Graduate School. The university provides more than $40 million each year in uncompensated care to Maryland citizens, and receives more than $667 million in extramural research funding annually. For more information about the University of Maryland, Baltimore visit www.umaryland.edu.