

# FOX 5 proves medical marijuana card ‘easy’ to get

by **Jenn Karlman** (April 26, 2013) Fox 5 News

SAN DIEGO – Medical marijuana has had its fair share of headlines this week, from the San Diego City Council considering re-legalizing dispensaries to Drug Enforcement Agents raiding them.

FOX-5 decided to investigate a different element of medicinal marijuana: How easy is it to get a card to legally smoke it?



Will Wooton is a teen drug and alcohol counselor and founder of [Pacific Treatment Services](#) in Escondido.

“First it was almost unbelievable. It was just hard to imagine that you could easily obtain something that can be misused,” he said. “Most of the kids think it’s a joke. In fact, they openly say it’s a get out of jail free card. That is one of the nicknames

around high school.”

Wooton said he used to see one to two teenagers a month who used their medical marijuana card as a means to get high. Now he sees more than that every week.

Legally, you must be at least 18 years old to obtain a medical marijuana card, but FOX 5 wanted to find out what else was required, so we decided to follow Wooton’s fellow counselor, Grant Glidewell, as he tried to get a card.

The first clinic we stopped at was in the North County. FOX 5 chose not to identify the medicinal marijuana clinics because several people we talked to admitted, easy access to cards is a wide-spread problem.

“The most common thing I hear from kids is that they go in and say they’re anxious and can’t sleep. I’m going to give that a shot and I’m pretty confident that will work,” said Glidewell.

It did work. Less than an hour later, Glidewell walked out of the first clinic with a card to legally smoke pot.

“When I saw the doctor, he smiled and had looked over my questionnaire briefly. He said ‘you have two of three main symptoms we treat here.’” Glidewell said. “He then said that I was going to love marijuana, that he and his wife smoked it and that I was going to have the best sleep of my life.”

Glidewell used his real name and driver’s license, but lied about his trouble sleeping. He also did not have corroborating evidence about his so-called condition.

“[The doctor] believed me and had absolutely no clinical insight about my history at all and no collateral information, nothing,” Glidewell said.

When asked if anything surprised him about the visit, Glidewell responded, “Nothing surprising at all. The only thing surprising is that I almost expected it to be a little more difficult, but it wasn’t.”

Glidewell’s second appointment was in Vista and it took 10 minutes. Once again, he walked out with a medical marijuana card. He said there wasn’t even a doctor on site. The doctor talked to him via Skype.

“This situation is exactly what I would expect. It’s the sum of all fears. There’s no verification, not even a doctor on site, the people running it are high and the whole place smells like weed. It’s really intensely bad. There’s no way to try and paint this as legitimate,” he said.

There are clinics in San Diego County that are stricter with their rules involving medicinal marijuana cards.

David Blair owns [A Green Alternative](#) in Kearny Mesa and requires anyone who wants a medical marijuana card to have a note from their doctor. He also refuses to give out cards to high school students, even if they’re 18 years old, without a parent being with them.

“Unfortunately, we are an anomaly. This is *medical* marijuana and we take our responsibilities quite sincerely,” said Blair.

When FOX 5 told Blair about our experience with Glidewell obtaining a card, Blair admitted it was disappointing.

“I think that’s troublesome. It hurts our cause and the people we are truly trying to help.”

A Green Alternative primarily treats elderly people and Blair admitted, he’s probably not as crowded as some of the other clinics, but “we can sleep at night.”

California law does not require medicinal marijuana clinics to require a doctor’s note before handing out cards, but it does require there to be a medical reason. That’s the loophole.

“I think that’s a problem, because doctors don’t know whether the information they’re being told is accurate,” said Blair.

When the information is not accurate, as Wooton and Glidewell admit is often the case with the teenagers they treat, the consequences can be devastating.

“Just because something is wrong, it should be wrong across the board. Especially when it comes to drugs. Kids should not have access to medical marijuana,” said Wooton.

[Pacific Treatment Services](#) offers weekly groups for parents and teenagers to deal with addiction. The sessions are free.

Read more: <http://fox5sandiego.com/2013/04/25/fox-5-proves-medical-marijuana-card-easy-to-get/#ixzz2S9t53Jes>