

Afro-Latina Led Cannabis Company Wins Maryland Cultivation and Processing License

Standard Wellness Maryland plans to open a 70,000 sq ft cultivation facility in 2023.

KENSINGTON, MARYLAND, UNITED STATES, April 4, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- While attention is showered on retail operations, cannabis cultivation, and processing form the essential foundation of the emerging legal industry. Standard Wellness Maryland, an MBE/DBE/CBE company, made history on Friday, April 1, 2022, when it became the first cannabis company with a Black and Latino majority owner to win a cultivation license in the state of Maryland. Christina Betancourt Johnson, CEO of Standard Wellness Maryland (SWM) is also one of the first Afro-Latinas to run a licensed cultivation company in the United States.

The historic licensure of Standard Wellness Maryland is the culmination of a hard-fought battle in a limited license state. In response to calls of bias and inequity in the application process and a lengthy appeal, the Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission recently granted a handful of minority-owned businesses cultivation and processing licenses. Standard Wellness Maryland is one of its newest license holders.

"I'm grateful for the support we have received throughout this process," said Standard Wellness Maryland CEO Christina Betancourt Johnson. "From legislators to fellow entrepreneurs in the cannabis space, we were encouraged and supported in this undertaking. Seeing other people of color successfully running cannabis businesses was inspirational and motivational. It's been a worthwhile journey and I'm excited for the impact that Standard Wellness Maryland will have on our state and communities most harmed by prohibition."

Johnson leads the Standard Wellness Maryland leadership team, comprised of DMV natives who understand the unique needs of local communities. SWM is centered around its values of



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community engagement, collective wellness, and wealth-building for the generations of people harmed by the nation's cannabis prohibition and the war on drugs. SWM seeks to be at the forefront of community education and economic empowerment to ensure that the harms of the past are rectified.

SWM strongly believes that health should be a source of fortitude and wellness without judgment. Over the years, a

stigma around cannabis and its users has become cemented in society. It has become associated with deviance and criminality, especially for Black and Brown people who are arrested at 4 times the rate of their white counterparts nationally.

"What's really important in our community is that we destigmatize cannabis, not just for restorative justice, and not just because of the decades of over-policing in our communities", says Johnson. "But, also because cannabis, at its core, is a wellness product. And if we aren't well, our communities won't be either."

As one of the country's only Black and Latina owners of a licensed cannabis company, Johnson recognizes her responsibility to be a community resource. SWM endeavors to elevate and improve the DMV market by creating clean, premium cannabis products that positively impact people's lives. Johnson also owns Rooted Therapeutics, a D.C.-based cannabis company seeking a medical facility license in the city. Both organizations will provide educational programs, philanthropic investments, and workforce development opportunities in the DMV region.

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