

Aaron C. Lachant

Partner

T: [310.736.4684](tel:310.736.4684)

F: 310.203.2727

alachant@nelsonhardiman.com



Aaron Lachant has been at the forefront of the marijuana industry since 2009. By solving novel and complex regulatory, compliance and licensing issues, Aaron has kept his clients, including approximately 45 of the 135 originally legalized dispensaries in Los Angeles under Proposition D (legislation he co-authored), in business and flourishing. Combining Aaron's pioneering experience getting marijuana businesses permitted with his adroit navigation of a regulatory landscape in flux, has made him the go-to attorney for legal cannabis advice.

Cannabis Industry Counsel and Trusted Advisor

He frequently acts as outside general counsel for clients in the industry and is active in the Greater Los Angeles Collective Alliance (GLACA), an association of medical cannabis cooperative and collective operators whose mission is to provide safe access to patients with adherence to a strict code of operational guidelines. He is the only attorney appointed to the Los Angeles County Advisory Working Group on Cannabis Regulation. Aaron also heads the consulting group, MMLG, which focuses on navigating local and state licensing application requirements for cannabis-related businesses.

Focused on the Marijuana Business

Well ahead of the curve on the issues facing the marijuana business, Aaron's work has grown with the maturing of the industry. He has worked on many sophisticated corporate transactions, advising clients on M&A deals, partnership disputes, and litigation involving regulatory violations. His legal knowledge of business and regulatory issues confronting the cannabis industry is complemented by years of experience representing other healthcare providers in all aspects of healthcare law. With the legal marijuana market expanding at a rapid pace, Aaron's practice is devoted to keeping marijuana businesses open and consults with regulators in various jurisdictions to keep laws favorable.

Accolades

The *Daily Journal* [named](#) Aaron one of the Top 40 attorneys in California under 40-years-old in 2018. *The Legal 500*, one of the premier legal research, ranking, and publishing firms in the world, [recognized](#) Aaron for his "cutting-edge work in the cannabis space." Similarly, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors [commended](#) Aaron for his service on the Los Angeles County Advisory Working Group on Cannabis Regulation. Aaron has been [recognized](#) by *The Best Lawyers in America* (2020-2024) for his healthcare litigation practice. He has been selected to the Southern California Rising Stars list by *Super Lawyers* every year since 2018. Additionally, Aaron was named by his peers as "Lawyer of The Year" for Litigation – Healthcare. This is a significant honor: only one lawyer per practice area in each region of the country with the highest overall feedback from their peers is awarded the "Lawyer of the Year" honor. Only the top 0.4% of lawyers earned this exceptional distinction in the 2023 edition, placing Aaron in elite company.

Life Outside the Firm

When he is not helping to keep (legal and permitted) drugs on the streets, Aaron spends his time rooting for the Syracuse Orange and exercising with the Los Angeles Rowing Club. He enjoys writing, traveling, playing the piano, building guitars, and sous vide cooking.

Practice Areas

- [Government Investigations](#)
- [Litigation](#)
- [Regulatory Compliance](#)
- [Transactions](#)

Credentials

Education

Syracuse University, J.D.

Admissions

State Bar of California

Affiliations

State Bar of California, Health Law Section
Health Care Compliance Association

Experience

- **Business Tax Dispute** A medical marijuana dispensary's business tax certificate was wrongfully canceled by the Los Angeles Office of Finance. The Office of Finance initially refused to reinstate the tax certificate. After Aaron's involvement, the Office quickly changed its tune, determined that the dispensary was compliant, and reinstated the certificate, enabling our client to re-open their business.
- **Compliance Programs** Prepared operating plan and compliance program for a medical marijuana dispensary in connection with license application.
- **Landlord/Tenant** Obtained favorable settlement and dismissal for a landlord in nuisance abatement action filed by the City of Los Angeles.
- **Licensing** Obtained permits for medical marijuana activity in Palm Springs, San Diego, Malibu, and San Luis Obispo.
- **California Medical Board** Successfully resolved a longstanding investigation by Operation Safe Medicine, a project of the Medical Board of California, helping a doctor avoid criminal prosecution by proactively addressing a physician compliance issue involving medical marijuana recommendations.
- **Multi-party Lawsuit** Represented 40 medical marijuana dispensaries and obtained favorable settlements in a multi-party lawsuit filed by the City of Los Angeles. Additionally, represented 20 medical marijuana dispensaries in a lawsuit filed against the City involving medical marijuana regulatory ordinance.
- **Partnership Dispute** Obtained preliminary injunction and stipulated judgment against individual operating a copycat marijuana dispensary using client's name.
- **Proposition D Defense** Obtained two complete dismissals against Prop D-compliant marijuana businesses, including a dismissal based on Kellett motion, as well as multiple settlements in which the City Attorney agreed not to prohibit the business from operating.
- **Proposition D Defense** Since Proposition D was passed in May 2013 to regulate local medical marijuana businesses, the Los Angeles City Attorney has shut down more than 800 dispensaries. Rarely is a case dismissed. But, in March 2017, Aaron won a dismissal on the first day of trial by showing that the prosecution would be unable to meet the legal burden proving our client engaged in illegal activity.
- **Regulatory** Drafted municipal medical marijuana regulatory ordinance that qualified for the May 2013 ballot in the City of Los Angeles, providing limited immunity from enforcement to approximately 135 original cannabis dispensaries from a previous City ordinance.
- **Taxation** Represented eight medical marijuana dispensaries in ongoing lawsuit related to the City of Los Angeles medical marijuana taxation ordinance.
- **Unfair Competition** Obtained a permanent injunction on behalf of a Los Angeles medical marijuana dispensary, as part of a global settlement with an illegal competitor business.
- **Unlawful Seizure** Obtained court order for the Los Angeles Police Department to return \$100,000 bail payment that was unlawfully seized as well as unlawfully seized medical marijuana.
- **Legislation** With the City of Malibu refusing to implement adult use cannabis regulations, Aaron drafted a ballot measure to overturn the cannabis ban. Measure G, which allows adult use cannabis and delivery in Malibu, not only qualified for the November 2018 election, but was also overwhelmingly passed by voters. As a result, one of Aaron's clients received their adult use permit from Malibu in January 2019 and will begin selling to the community shortly.