

# DELAWARE MOVES TO ADOPT REVISED MODEL RULES ON MEDICATION

By: Tom LaMarra

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The Delaware Thoroughbred Racing Commission Jan. 11 moved to update model rules for the Multiple Medication Violation Penalty System and out-of-competition testing.

Both rules were approved by the Association of Racing Commissioners International Dec. 9, 2016, after endorsement from the Racing Medication and Testing Consortium.

DTRC Chairman Duncan Patterson said the penalty system, which is one of four components of the National Uniform Medication Program, in its current form didn't grant stewards latitude to assign penalty days and therefore proved problematic for some state attorneys general. The revised rule provides a range for suspension days.

"It's good to have complete uniformity, so modifications must be made," Patterson said.

The Maryland Racing Commission granted emergency approval to the updated MMV Penalty System at its December meeting.

The new out-of-competition testing model rule greatly expands on the current version, which has a limited list of substances for testing, to include all substances on the ARCI prohibited list, including anabolic steroids.

"A lot of the discussion (among industry stakeholders) had to do with off-site testing," Patterson said. "The new rule will allow us to do that. There was full support to put more teeth into the rule."

DTRC Executive Director John Wayne said that in 2016, 1,785 tests were conducted on samples taken from racehorses at Delaware Park, and 201—roughly 11%—were out-of-competition samples.

"I think that's probably the highest (percentage) in North America, and it's comparable to what Hong Kong and some other countries are doing," Wayne said. "Fortunately, we have the support of Delaware Park and (owner William) Rickman to do these kinds of tests. I think we employ the best management practices in drug testing."

The cost for out-of-competition tests will increase a bit this year because Truesdail Laboratories will be testing for more substances.

Officials said the updated MMV Penalty System and out-of-competition testing rules will be adopted by reference after they are published in a state journal. The live meet at Delaware Park this year doesn't begin until June 3.

*(DTRC meeting photo by Tom LaMarra)*