

Georgia to be first state to let pharmacies sell low-dose cannabis

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Four years after the state of Georgia approved the distribution of low-dose THC, medical marijuana may be sold at local pharmacies.

That will make Georgia the first U.S. state where pharmacies sell [medical cannabis](#), *CNN* reported.

By year's end, [patients](#) who meet a very narrow criteria for [medical cannabis use](#) under Georgia's law will be able to buy low-dose THC products at their [local pharmacy](#).

What that won't mean is joints being sold at pharmacies, said [Gary Long](#), CEO of the medical cannabis production company Botanical Sciences, one of two licensed distributors in Georgia, *CNN* reported.

What it will mean is that pharmacies around the state that want to sell products with THC content of 5% or less can file an application with the Georgia Board of Pharmacy. Products may include oils, tinctures, topicals, capsules and lozenges.

"There are patients in my area that I talk to all the time who've been begging for this," pharmacist Jonathan Marquess told *CNN*.

THC is the component of cannabis that makes someone high, but that's also why it's prescribed for pain, nausea and insomnia.

Long said 130 local pharmacies have agreed to sell his products. A professional association representing independent pharmacies said many of the state's 400 independent pharmacies have seemed interested in getting the license.

The idea of selling medical cannabis through pharmacies in a traditionally conservative state has drawn attention.

"I've never seen anything like it," Long said.

"My 20-year-old kids were like 'Dad, you just went viral,' And I'm like, 'Ok, cool,'" Long told *CNN*.

The law, passed in 2019, has faced a long delay in coming to fruition,

CNN reported.

Three other states have laws that would allow pharmacies to sell marijuana, but they have not started doing this, [Andrew Turnage](#), the executive director of the GA Access to Medical Cannabis Commission, told *CNN*.

Yet, it's still federally illegal to sell any form of cannabis.

"It's federally illegal for a pharmacist, I'm pretty certain, to dispense cannabis, but it's also federally illegal to do anything with cannabis," said [Jay Wexler](#), a professor of law at Boston University School of Law and author of 'Weed Rules,' a book focused on legalization.

"In the cannabis space, many things are formally illegal, but the question becomes whether anybody can or is willing to do anything about it," he told *CNN*.

Marquess said many of his patients have received a doctor's permission to register and get a card to buy THC oil products.

"I've had many, many of my patients show me their cards," said Marquess, who is vice president of the Georgia Pharmacy Association's Academy of Independent Pharmacy.

He said that it's been dangerous for his patients not to have access to low THC products because they're buying this in other states or from places that may be unsafe.

He noted the advantage of getting THC from a pharmacist.

"They can provide some education, some resources and even counsel to get on the right product," Marquess said.

Other states would like to replicate Georgia's program, Turnage added.

"States that have adult use of recreational cannabis are struggling to preserve their medical programs and those states are reaching out to learn about the dispensing pharmacies as a potential avenue to preserve patient access in their state so that their patient program doesn't collapse under the weight of recreational use," Turnage explained.

Long is hoping to see increased access because Georgia's [medical marijuana law](#) is still more restrictive than most states, *CNN* reported.

Among those restrictions are that doctors can only prescribe the drug for people with 16 particular diseases, including some stages of cancer, PTSD and Alzheimer's.

"The Georgia law itself still has a long way to go," [Aaron Smith](#), executive director of the National Cannabis Industry Association, told *CNN*.

"So, it's good to see Georgia come into line with the vast majority of states that already have medical use, but other states have done it in a way that I think is more effective at actually meeting the needs of patients," Smith said.

More information: The U.S. National Institute on Drug Abuse has more on [medical marijuana](#).

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