

Psilocybin Bill in New Jersey Amended to Exclude Broader Legalization

A New Jersey Assembly committee has adopted an amendment to a psilocybin bill, aligning its provisions with a Senate companion version. This amendment removes language for broader legalization and focuses solely on therapeutic use.

Expert Testimony and Committee Approval

On Monday, the Assembly Health Committee heard testimony from experts before approving the amendment to the Psilocybin Behavioral Health Access and Services Act. This act is sponsored by Assemblymembers Herb Conaway (D), Clinton Calabrese (D), and Anthony Verrelli (D).

Senate Committee Action

This amendment comes just over a week after a Senate committee revised and passed its version of the psilocybin proposal, which is backed by Senate President Nick Scutari (D) and others.

Addressing Treatment Deficiencies

“The intent of the proposal is to deal with and address the very real deficiencies that we are finding in terms of treatment for those who are in distress and not yet able to obtain therapeutic benefit by alternate means,” said Conaway, who chairs the Assembly panel. “We’ll see as we move forward how this bill shapes up.”

Legislative History and Amendments

Initially, the legislation included personal legalization provisions, allowing adults to possess and use psilocybin. The recent amendments remove these components, narrowing the focus to therapeutic use.

Regulatory Framework

The amended bill charges the Department of Health (DOH) with licensing and regulating the manufacture, testing, transport, delivery, sale, and purchase of psilocybin. There will be five license types: manufacturer, service center operator, testing laboratory, facilitator, and psilocybin worker.

Psilocybin Advisory Board

A Psilocybin Advisory Board will establish qualifying medical conditions for use, propose guidelines for psilocybin services and dosage, craft safety screenings and informed consent practices, and oversee facilitator education, training, and conduct. The goal is to develop a strategic plan for safe, accessible, and affordable access to psilocybin for all people 21 and older.

Social Equity Program

A social equity program will provide financial assistance to help low-income individuals cover the costs of psilocybin services. DOH will also establish programs for technical assistance, reduced fees, and other support services.

Therapeutic Focus

To emphasize the therapeutic focus, the bill changes references from “clients” to “patients,” and “integrated session” to “integrated therapy session.” It also removes references to the existing Cannabis Regulatory Commission.

Accessing Psilocybin Services

Patients with qualifying conditions will need a referral from a licensed health care professional to access psilocybin services. These services will include mandatory preparation and integration sessions before and after psilocybin administration.

Public Support

A recent survey from Stockton University’s William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy found that 55 percent of New Jersey residents support legalizing psilocybin for medical use under a doctor’s supervision. Only 20 percent opposed, while 24 percent were unsure.

Broader Psychedelic Legislative Efforts

Lawmakers in other states are also considering psychedelics legislation, focusing on therapeutic benefits. States like Massachusetts, Arizona, California, Vermont, Maryland, and others are advancing various bills and task forces to explore and regulate psilocybin and other psychedelics for medical use.

As New Jersey lawmakers narrow the focus of the psilocybin bill to therapeutic use, the move aligns with growing national interest in exploring the medical benefits of psychedelics while ensuring responsible regulation and patient safety.

Email: info@cannabisriskmanager.com | Phone: +415-226-4060

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