

Iowa Legislators Pass Bills to Tighten Hemp Product Regulations and Broaden Medical Cannabis Access

The Iowa Senate approved a bill on Tuesday to make the rules stricter for consumable hemp products as they become more common. They also voted on a bill to double the number of licenses available for medical cannabis dispensaries.

House File 2605, passed with a 31-18 vote, would restrict consumable hemp products to contain only four milligrams of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) per serving and 10 milligrams per container. It would also require warning labels and set a minimum age of 21 for purchasing these products. Additionally, the bill introduces new rules and penalties for possession, sale, and manufacturing of hemp products.

Senator Dan Dawson, who manages the bill, explained that updating the Iowa Hemp Act is important to regulate the growing industry and to ensure that people are not using hemp products instead of the state's medical cannabidiol program, which requires a doctor's prescription.

Although Democratic senators opposed the bill, they didn't voice their opposition during the debate. Representative John Forbes expressed concerns about potential unintended consequences for people using hemp products for medical purposes outside of the medical cannabidiol program, such as those recovering from opioid addiction.

Senator Tom Shipley supported the bill, noting that loopholes in the existing law allowed some businesses to sell unregulated products. The new bill aims to close these gaps.

Besides regulating hemp products, lawmakers are also considering imposing a 2.5 percent excise tax on their sales to address tax differences between alcohol and hemp product retailers.

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