

Rick Perry Advocates Psychedelic Research at Dallas Screening

Rick Perry Pushes for Ibogaine Access and Research Funding at Dallas Documentary Screening

Former Texas Governor Calls for Expanded Psychedelic Therapy Options for Veterans and First Responders

DALLAS – Former Texas Governor Rick Perry made a passionate call for greater access to ibogaine, a psychedelic compound derived from the African iboga shrub, during a panel discussion on Thursday night following a film screening at Cinépolis Luxury Cinemas. The event centered on documentary footage exploring ibogaine’s potential to treat addiction, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and traumatic brain injuries (TBIs)—conditions that have disproportionately affected U.S. veterans and first responders.

Perry, who served as Governor of Texas from 2000 to 2015 and later as U.S. Energy Secretary under President Donald Trump, spoke candidly about his personal experience with ibogaine and his ongoing mission to normalize its research within conservative circles. The discussion marked a milestone in Perry’s evolution from policymaker to outspoken advocate for psychedelic-assisted therapy, a movement that has gained bipartisan traction in recent years.

Rick Perry’s Personal Experience with Ibogaine Sparks Renewed Advocacy

During the panel, Perry recounted his firsthand encounter with ibogaine therapy. In 2023, he traveled to a clinic near Tijuana, Mexico, where he participated in a 12-hour ibogaine session designed to reset the brain’s neural circuits often disrupted by trauma and substance dependency. The following day, he said, he felt an unprecedented sense of calm and mental clarity.

“We’re changing the world,” Perry told the crowd. “And we’re saving lives.”

His statement drew applause from the audience, many of whom included veterans and supporters of alternative mental health treatments. Perry described ibogaine not as a recreational substance but as a profound neurological intervention capable of reshaping pathways affected by trauma.

A New Documentary Highlights Ibogaine’s Complex History and Healing Potential

The evening featured exclusive excerpts from an upcoming documentary directed by Lucy Walker, the British filmmaker best known for the Netflix series *How to Change Your Mind*, which explored the therapeutic promise of psychedelics. Walker’s latest project dives deep into ibogaine’s West African origins, its ceremonial use among the Bwiti tribes of Gabon, and its migration into modern addiction treatment clinics across Mexico and Europe.

The film weaves together personal recovery stories from U.S. veterans who traveled abroad seeking relief through ibogaine therapy. Many found themselves outside regulatory oversight, navigating unlicensed clinics that promise life-changing outcomes but operate without FDA supervision.

Panelists Unite to Discuss Science, Safety, and the Road to Legal Access

Joining Perry on stage were several prominent figures in the ibogaine movement:

- Robert Gallery, former NFL player and advocate for traumatic brain injury recovery.
- Jay Kopelman, a former U.S. Marine who now works with veterans' mental health organizations.
- Dr. Martín Polanco, a physician recognized as one of the earliest clinicians to integrate ibogaine and related psychedelics into structured treatment for veterans at his Tijuana retreat.

Dr. Polanco explained that ibogaine's mechanism of action involves resetting dopamine receptors and interrupting addictive behavior cycles. He noted that hundreds of veterans have experienced improvements in PTSD symptoms and substance dependency following therapy—though the lack of U.S. regulatory approval continues to push such treatments offshore.

“Without FDA clearance, we're forced to operate in the shadows,” Polanco said. “Americans deserve access to safe, supervised treatments that can save lives.”

Texas Takes the Lead in Psychedelic Research with Bold Legislative Support

The Dallas event came just months after Texas lawmakers approved up to \$50 million in funding for ibogaine research through Senate Bill 2308, signed by Governor Greg Abbott in June. The measure positions Texas as a national leader in psychedelic science, authorizing a research consortium of universities, hospitals, and pharmaceutical companies to develop clinical studies under state oversight.

The legislation also includes a revenue-sharing clause that allows Texas to claim at least 20% of future revenues from any ibogaine-derived drug approved for market. Of that, 25% is earmarked to support veterans' health programs—a unique fiscal model designed to tie innovation to social reinvestment.

Perry, who has been involved with ibogaine advocacy since first hearing about it in 2006 through Navy SEAL Marcus Luttrell, helped lay the groundwork for this legislative breakthrough. His Republican background has lent political credibility to a field often associated with countercultural movements.

National and Global Momentum Builds Despite Federal Restrictions

Despite state-level progress, ibogaine remains a Schedule I controlled substance under federal law, categorized alongside heroin and LSD as having no accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse. However, early scientific data challenges this designation. Preliminary studies suggest ibogaine may help interrupt opioid dependence, reduce cravings, and alleviate PTSD symptoms by promoting neural rewiring.

Countries like New Zealand, Brazil, and Mexico allow ibogaine use under certain medical frameworks, while Israel and Ukraine have expressed interest in partnering with U.S. researchers to accelerate trials. Perry has been part of international outreach efforts encouraging collaboration across military health and neuroscience sectors.

Still, experts emphasize the need for rigorous clinical trials to confirm safety and efficacy, particularly given ibogaine's potential cardiac risks. Researchers warn that poor data integrity or inadequate monitoring could set back public acceptance for years.

Conservative Leadership and Psychedelic Innovation: A Surprising Alliance

Perry's public stance represents a growing ideological shift within conservative politics. Once skeptical of psychedelic research, some right-leaning policymakers now view it as a veterans' health issue and a cost-saving innovation for states burdened by opioid and mental health crises.

At Highly Capitalized Network (HCN), analysts note that Texas' research model could serve as a blueprint for future federal programs. By linking state investment, intellectual property participation, and veterans' care, Texas is testing an incentive-driven framework that balances ethics and economics.

A Turning Point for Veterans and the Future of Psychedelic Medicine

As the Dallas audience filed out, one message lingered: change is already underway. The combination of grassroots advocacy, credible political voices, and cautious legislative experimentation is reframing psychedelics from taboo to tool. For veterans facing depression, addiction, and trauma, ibogaine could represent both hope and healing provided science is allowed to lead.

Rick Perry's appearance wasn't merely symbolic. It was a call to action, echoing across ideological lines and into the heart of America's ongoing mental health crisis. Whether Texas' initiative will succeed remains to be seen, but for many in attendance, the conversation itself felt like a historic first step toward legitimacy and compassion-driven reform.

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