

# Medical Cannabis Expansion Takes Center Stage in New Hampshire Legislative Agenda

## The Current Landscape

While uncertainty surrounds the fate of a House-passed bill aiming to legalize adult-use cannabis in New Hampshire, lawmakers have turned their attention to enhancing the state's existing medical marijuana program through a series of proposed reforms.

## The Legislative Agenda

This week, several bills were presented before legislative committees, seeking to address various aspects of the state's medical cannabis system. The proposed changes include allowing patients to cultivate marijuana at home, expanding the list of qualifying conditions, and granting broader authority to healthcare providers to recommend medical cannabis.

### **HB 1278: Expanding Qualifying Conditions**

This bill, sponsored by Rep. Wendy Thomas, seeks to broaden the scope of conditions eligible for medical marijuana treatment. Under HB 1278, healthcare providers would have the discretion to recommend cannabis for any debilitating or terminal condition where the benefits of therapeutic cannabis outweigh potential health risks, beyond the existing enumerated list.

### **HB 1231: Medical Marijuana Homegrow**

Another proposal, HB 1231, presented by Rep. Thomas, aims to permit registered patients and caregivers to cultivate a limited number of cannabis plants at home. Advocates argue that home cultivation would improve patient access, reduce costs, and offer personalized treatment options.

### **HB 1349: Inclusion of Generalized Anxiety Disorder**

Sponsored by Rep. Howard, HB 1349 seeks to add generalized anxiety disorder to the list of qualifying conditions for medical marijuana. The bill acknowledges the therapeutic potential of cannabis in managing anxiety and offers patients an alternative to traditional medications with potentially adverse side effects.

### **HB 1581: Allowing Cultivation in Greenhouses**

HB 1581, introduced by Rep. Suzanne Vail, proposes to expand cultivation options for Alternative Treatment Centers (ATCs) by permitting cannabis growth in greenhouses. This measure aims to enhance efficiency, reduce production costs, and improve access to affordable medical cannabis products.

## **SB 357: Provider Authority Expansion**

Under consideration is SB 357, which would authorize any licensed healthcare provider to recommend medical marijuana, aligning with federal DEA registration requirements. This bill seeks to streamline the recommendation process and ensure patient access to cannabis treatment from a broader range of healthcare professionals.

## **SB 426: Vehicle Possession Penalties**

SB 426 addresses penalties for marijuana possession in vehicles, proposing fines and license suspensions for non-compliance with storage requirements. The measure aims to regulate cannabis transportation in a manner similar to alcohol, promoting public safety on the roads.

## **Looking Ahead**

While these medical cannabis bills await further deliberation, New Hampshire remains in the midst of a broader debate over adult-use legalization. Despite the passage of a legalization bill in the House, uncertainty looms as stakeholders navigate differing perspectives on regulatory frameworks and retail models. As negotiations continue, the fate of cannabis reform in New Hampshire hangs in the balance, with potential implications for patients, consumers, and the broader cannabis industry.

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