

Unlocking Healing Potential: Yale Researchers Explore Psilocybin for PTSD Treatment

Since adult-use cannabis was legalized in Missouri in 2022, the state has made significant strides in leveraging cannabis sales revenue to support various public services. Recently, the state divided \$15 million in adult-use sales revenue to fund support services for military veterans, substance abuse treatment programs, and the Missouri Public Defenders budget. This amount is projected to increase to \$19 million by the end of the fiscal year on July 1.

Fund Accumulation and Distribution

Amy Moore, the director of the Division of Cannabis Regulation (DCR), expressed satisfaction with the fund accumulation so far. “It is so rewarding to see the impact of this voter-approved program on organizations that provide vital services to Missourians. We look forward to watching this impact grow and are grateful to be a part of it,” Moore said.

The revenue collection process for medical and adult-use cannabis in Missouri has distinct pathways. Once operational costs are covered, medical cannabis revenue goes directly to the Missouri Veterans Commission (MVC). In contrast, adult-use cannabis revenue first covers any fees related to cannabis offense expungement, with the remaining funds split among three beneficiaries: the MVC, the Missouri State Public Defender, and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS).

Beneficiaries of Cannabis Revenue

1. **Missouri Veterans Commission (MVC):** Provides healthcare and other services to veterans and their families.
2. **Missouri State Public Defender:** Offers legal assistance to low-income Missourians.
3. **Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS):** Operates programs to increase access to evidence-based drug addiction treatments, overdose prevention, and reintegration services for those with substance use disorders.

The most recent transfer on May 17, 2023, totaled \$15,229,302, with each beneficiary receiving \$5,076,434.

Projected Revenue Growth

In January 2024, Amy Moore presented to the House Veterans Committee, showing that the MVC is expected to receive a total of \$19 million from cannabis sales revenue by the end of the fiscal year. Moore further estimated that this amount would increase to approximately \$22 million next year. “The governor’s recommendation is quite a bit more than expected and that is tied to the unexpectedly robust sales, mostly on the adult-use side,” Moore noted.

Revenue from Medical and Adult-Use Cannabis

As of Moore's January presentation, Missouri had collected \$98,873,147 in medical cannabis revenue, with \$41,406,336 allocated to DCR operating expenses and \$39,978,820 directed to veterans. Adult-use revenue totaled \$57,743,824, with \$8,152,210 covering DCR expenses and the remainder split among the three beneficiary groups.

Impact on Veterans and Public Services

Rep. Dave Griffith, the chair of the veterans committee, commented on the success of cannabis legalization. "The amount of sales that they've had with commercial marijuana has been just record-breaking and exceeded all expectations and projections," Griffith said. He aims to increase the funds given to the MVC to \$50 million annually to better serve veterans. "Many of them are so overburdened with their caseloads that it's hard to get in with them," Griffith explained. "If we can increase the number we have, we can start trying to cut down on that wait time many veterans have."

Statements from Key Figures

Amy Moore released a statement in October 2023 highlighting the positive growth from the adult-use cannabis market. "It is incredible that Missouri voters passed the adult-use amendment less than one year ago, and we are now starting to see the financial impact the program's success will have on multiple organizations and the Missourians they serve," Moore said.

MVC executive director Paul Kirchoff also praised the program, stating, "These funds will help MVC continue to support the existing infrastructure of our seven Veterans Homes."

Future Prospects and Related Initiatives

While legal cannabis continues to benefit Missouri, the state is also exploring the legalization of psilocybin therapy for veterans. In March, the Missouri House Veterans Committee passed a psilocybin legalization bill (Senate Bill 768), which, if enacted, would allow veterans to use psilocybin therapy.

In April, the Missouri House of Representatives approved a budget bill allocating \$10 million from the state opioid settlement funds for psilocybin research grants. These studies will focus on the effects of psilocybin on people with opioid abuse disorder. Initially, the research was to include ibogaine but was later changed to focus solely on psilocybin due to safety concerns raised by the Department of Mental Health.

As Missouri continues to develop its legal cannabis and psilocybin programs, the state remains committed to using these revenues to support public health and veteran services, ensuring a positive impact on its residents.

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