



K N I G H T

Integrative Medicine

Update: Get the Facts about Medical Marijuana

The Louisiana Department of Health has NO authority to regulate medical marijuana or determine what entities can or cannot grow, process, manufacture or distribute medical marijuana nor does the Department have any authority to decide which conditions may be prescribed medical marijuana. Finally, the Department has no authority relating to which entities are licensed to dispense medical marijuana.

- Act 261 was passed in 2015 which allows **physicians** to prescribe (recommend) Medical Marijuana.
- Louisiana has not legalized recreational marijuana.
- The Legislature named the agriculture centers at Louisiana State University and Southern University as the only legal growers of marijuana plants, from which medicines will be extracted.
- LSU has entered into a Medical Marijuana contract with GB Sciences to grow marijuana for medical purposes in Louisiana.
- No LSU students will be employed at the indoor growing facility and it will not be on LSU property or adjacent to the LSU campuses.
- Southern University has selected Advanced Biomedics, a Lafayette-based company for medical marijuana cultivation and production.
- The anticipated date that Medical Marijuana will be available is November 2018.
- Only a limited number of specially-licensed pharmacies will distribute Medical Marijuana
- Act 261 of the 2015 legislative session approved the list of debilitating conditions that will be eligible for treatment with Medical Marijuana. These conditions include cancer, positive status for HIV, AIDS, cachexia or wasting syndrome, seizure disorders, epilepsy, spasticity, Crohn's disease, muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis.

- Act 708 of the 2018 (effective 8-1-2018) legislative session added glaucoma, Parkinson's disease, severe muscle spasms, intractable pain and post traumatic disorder to the list of debilitating conditions eligible for treatment with Medical Marijuana.
- Act 496 of the 2018 (effective 5-23-2018) legislative session added any of these four conditions associated with autism spectrum disorder as an eligible condition:
 - repetitive or self-stimulatory behavior of such severity that the physical health of the person with autism is jeopardized;
 - avoidance of others or inability to communicate of such severity that the physical health of the person with autism is jeopardized;
 - self-injuring behavior; and
 - physically aggressive or destructive behavior.

How many [pharmacies](#) will have permits to offer medical marijuana?

- The enabling legislation placed a limit on the number of marijuana pharmacy permits; no more than 10 such permits may be active at the same time in the entire state.
- To implement the legislative mandate for an equitable geographic distribution of the marijuana pharmacies across the state, the Board recognizes the nine regions of the state established by the Department of Health, allocating one marijuana pharmacy permit to each region of the state: Acadian, Capitol, CENLA, New Orleans metro, Northeast, Northwest, Florida parishes, Teche.
- Currently, there are nine licensed physicians who are authorized to recommend medical marijuana within the state of Louisiana.

What is medical marijuana?

- The term medical marijuana refers to using the whole, unprocessed marijuana plant or its basic extracts to treat symptoms of illness and other conditions.

- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not recognized or approved the marijuana plant as medicine.
- Medical marijuana does not include the inhalation or vaping of cannabis. According to the law it cannot be in raw form or smoked.
- The different acceptable forms are oils, extracts, tinctures, sprays, capsules, pills, solutions, suspension, gelatin-based chewables, lotions, transdermal patches, and suppositories.

Why isn't the marijuana plant an FDA-approved medicine?

- The FDA requires carefully conducted studies (clinical trials) in hundreds to thousands of human subjects to determine the benefits and risks of a possible medication.
- So far, researchers have not conducted enough large-scale clinical trials that show that the benefits of the marijuana plant (as opposed to its cannabinoid ingredients) outweigh its risks in patients it's meant to treat.

Approved Pharmacies awarded permits to dispense Medical Marijuana - The tenth marijuana pharmacy permit may be issued at a future date not yet designated, following a determination of need as indicated by the volume of dispensing transactions in all of the marijuana pharmacies over a period of time not yet defined.

Approved List of Physicians to Recommend Medical Marijuana - Last Update 9/17/2018

Provided by Louisiana Department of Health/Office of Behavioral Health/Prevention Division 6/2018

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana-medicine>