



Recent Updates to Hawai'i's Medical Cannabis Laws, Trends in Other States and the Prospects of Federal Reform

With six of the eight initial Hawai'i medical cannabis licensees now serving registered medical cannabis patients, the fledgling industry is gradually gaining a foothold. Recently passed legislation sitting on Governor Ige's desk would further reform both the operations of dispensaries, including introducing reciprocity for out-of-state visiting patients, as well as the oversight by the State Department of Health. Other bills would open the door to tackling the opioid epidemic with medical cannabis as well as explore the role of the insurance industry in reimbursing patients who choose this form of medicine.

Meanwhile, other states like Pennsylvania, New York and Illinois are pushing the envelope on medical cannabis and fostering a research role for the state's flagship universities and allowing opioid prescriptions to be honored for medical cannabis at dispensaries. Other states protect their patients from arbitrary discrimination by their employers and allow edible cannabis to be sold at the dispensaries.

In Washington DC, bipartisan coalitions in Congress protect medical cannabis businesses from federal interference and are calling for the rescheduling of this drug that is still officially considered as dangerous as heroin. Simultaneously, there is a push to change federal law to allow banks to work with cannabis companies. States and dispensaries are finding creative ways to go cashless, from using e-commerce apps to doing business with state credit unions and smaller banks. Nationwide, at least 360 such financial institutions are involved in the industry.

Friday, June 29, 2018
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

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