



## Summary of Iowa's Medical Cannabidiol Program

In 2014, Iowa lawmakers enacted a restrictive law to allow certain patients to possess — but not access — low-THC cannabis oils without facing a conviction. The law was significantly revised in 2017 (HB 524) and 2019 (HF 2589). With those changes, there is a much longer list of qualifying conditions, which includes chronic pain and PTSD. Iowa now allows in-state access to cannabis preparations, and patients are no longer limited to low-THC preparations.

However, Iowa's program — called the [Medical Cannabidiol Program](#) — is still among the most restrictive medical cannabis programs: only cannabis preparations — not raw flower — are allowed. Only two manufacturers are authorized in the state, home cultivation is not allowed, and patients are limited in the amount of THC they can access every 90 days — unless they have a waiver.

Here are key features of the law:

**Qualifying conditions:** Chronic pain; HIV or AIDS; Crohn's disease; post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS); nausea or severe vomiting; cachexia or severe wasting syndrome; Parkinson's disease; ulcerative colitis; corticobasal degeneration; multiple sclerosis with severe and persistent muscle spasms; seizures; any terminal illness, with a probable life expectancy of under one year, and if the illness or its treatment produce severe or chronic pain; severe, intractable autism with self-injurious or aggressive behaviors; and cancer, if the underlying condition or treatment produces severe or chronic pain, nausea or severe vomiting, or cachexia or severe wasting syndrome.

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**Enrolling in the program:** In order to enroll in the program, patients must obtain a written certification from their primary care provider, who must be either a doctor (MD or DO), a podiatrist, a physician's assistant, an advanced registered nurse practice, or an advanced practice registered nurse. Patients must be permanent residents of the state. Patients under 18 can only enroll in the program through their caregivers. Patient registration can be found [here](#).

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**Caregivers:** Under the program, caregivers can [enroll](#) to help patients pick up and use the oil. Caregivers must be residents of Iowa or a bordering state to Iowa and at least 18 years of age. The patients' doctors must designate them as a necessary caretaker.

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**Registration card fees:** Card fees for patients are typically \$100. However, if the patient receives social security disability benefits, supplemental security insurance payments, or is enrolled in a medical assistance program, the fee is \$25. Caregiver cards are \$25.

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**Medical cannabidiol board powers:** A medical cannabidiol board has the power to add new conditions to the state program.

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**Business licenses and regulations:** Two manufacturers have been licensed under the law. They supply low-THC cannabis oils to up to five licensed dispensaries, which sell the oils to qualifying patients. (As of July 2020, however, two of the dispensaries permanently closed and one manufacturer temporarily closed.) You can find the dispensaries' locations [here](#).

Manufacturers must contract with a laboratory for spot-check testing of cannabis for content, contamination, and consistency. Dispensaries must employ a pharmacist or pharmacist technician to make dosing recommendations.

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**Cannabis oil limits:** Raw (flower) cannabis is not permitted. Smoking is also not permitted. In most cases, patients can obtain cannabis preparations containing no more than at 4.5 grams of THC every 90 days. However, a practitioner can allow a specific, greater amount that the practitioner finds appropriate if either: 1) the patient has a terminal medical condition, with a life expectancy of under a year; or 2) the patient is not new to the program, and the practitioner determines 4.5 grams is insufficient for the patient.

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**Out-of-state reciprocity:** Patients visiting Iowa from another state who are registered with a cannabidiol program in their home state can possess and consume cannabis in Iowa, but they are not permitted to make purchases. The law allows Iowa patients to register to obtain the oil in Minnesota. However, Minnesota's medical cannabis program does not currently permit this.

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**Employers and property owners can prohibit cannabis:** Pursuant to the 2019 revision of the law, property owners and employers are allowed to ban medical cannabis use. Employers can include in contracts that employees are prohibited from using cannabis, and they may continue to establish and enforce a zero-tolerance drug policy. The law does not require a person who "owns, occupies, or controls a property" to allow marijuana use or possession on the property.

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**Health care not required to cover cannabis:** Pursuant to the 2019 revision of the law, none of the following are required to reimburse for medical cannabis: government medical assistance programs, private health insurers, workers' compensation carriers, and self-insured employers providing workers' compensation benefits.

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