



Summary of P.L. 210 (2021), Pennsylvania Medical Cannabis Improvement

On June 30, 2021, Governor Wolf signed P.L. 210 into law, making several improvements to Pennsylvania's medical cannabis program. P.L. 210 (otherwise known as HB 1024) was sponsored by Rep. Paul Schemel (R-Franklin) and acts on recommendations made by the Department of Health to revise the Medical Marijuana Act, which was signed into law in 2016. Most notably, it allows patients to purchase three times as much cannabis as they previously could, and it removes language that steered chronic pain patients to try more dangerous painkillers first. P.L. 210 also narrows the restriction on people with past drug convictions working in or owning medical cannabis businesses. It protects patient safety standards and product quality of Pennsylvania's medical marijuana program while empowering the Medical Marijuana Advisory Board to continue to consider new medical conditions for eligibility. It will also retain certain flexibilities enacted under the state's COVID-19 disaster declaration that patients and dispensaries found improved safe access.

Here are the changes made by P.L. 210:

- Allows patients to access a 90-day supply of cannabis. Previously, they were only allowed to purchase a 30-day supply.
- Removes limitations on chronic pain as a qualifying condition. Previously, chronic pain only qualified if "conventional therapeutic intervention and opiate therapy is contraindicated or ineffective."
- Allows medical marijuana businesses to have financial backers, principals, and employees with misdemeanor drug convictions, or drug-related or non-violent felonies that are at least 10 years prior to application.
- Expands the definition of caregiver and allows patients to designate individuals that work in home health, palliative care, long-term care, or hospice settings to be their caregiver.
- Removes the limit on the number of patients a caregiver can assist. The previous limit was five patients per caregiver.
- Adds new qualifying conditions: cancer remission therapy, damage to nervous tissue of the brain, and neuropathies associated with nervous tissue damage.
- Removes a previous funding requirement to repay initial state funding from the program within 10 years, allowing for medical marijuana program funding to be re-dedicated to patient and caregiver programs, like the patient hardships fund, which helps with the cost of medicine.
- Allows the Department of Health to establish one 30-day period each year, during which producers can bring in new genetics from outside of Pennsylvania.
- Allows cultivators to contract with more than one laboratory for testing.
- Allows dispensaries to contract with remote physicians rather than requiring them to be on-site.
- Allows dispensaries to permanently implement curbside delivery protocols.