

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Health Policy

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BILL: CS/SB 1030

INTRODUCER: Health Policy Committee, Senator Bradley and others

SUBJECT: Medical-Grade Marijuana and Cannabis

DATE: March 11, 2014

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Looke	Stovall	HP	Fav/CS
2.			CJ	
3.			AP	

**Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:**

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

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**I. Summary:**

CS/SB 1030 creates s. 456.60, F.S., in order to allow the compassionate use of low-THC marijuana. The bill allows certain patients whose Florida licensed physician registers them with the Department of Health (DOH) to use low-THC marijuana under limited circumstances. The bill defines low-THC marijuana as containing no more than .5 percent of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and at least 15 percent of cannabidiol (CBD).

Physicians may only register patients with severe and chronic seizures or muscle spasms who they have treated for 6 or more months and they must adhere to a number of requirements including keeping a plan of treatment for that patient and monitoring the patient's use of the low-THC marijuana. Patients who are ordered low-THC marijuana by their physician are added to a registry that is created and maintained by the DOH. Such patients may only purchase or acquire low-THC marijuana in the amount ordered by their physician and only from a dispensing organization that is approved by the DOH.

The bill establishes a number of criteria that an organization must meet and continuously adhere to in order to be approved by the DOH as a dispensing organization. The DOH is required to approve at least one, but no more than four, such organizations.

The bill also exempts patients and their legal representatives from the legal restrictions on purchasing, acquiring, possession, and medical use of low-THC marijuana in other parts of the Florida Statutes. Approved dispensing organizations, including its owners, managers, and

employees are exempted from such legal restrictions for the cultivation, production, possession, and sale of low-THC marijuana and for possessing and disposing of any byproducts of such cultivation and production.

## II. Present Situation:

### Treatment of Marijuana in Florida

Florida law defines Cannabis as “all parts of any plant of the genus *Cannabis*, whether growing or not; the seeds thereof; the resin extracted from any part of the plant; and every compound, manufacture, salt, derivative, mixture, or preparation of the plant or its seeds or resin”<sup>1</sup> and places it, along with other sources of THC, on the list of schedule 1 drugs.<sup>2</sup> Schedule 1 drugs are substances that have a high potential for abuse and no currently accepted medical use in treatment in the United States. As a schedule 1 drug, possession and trafficking in cannabis carry criminal penalties that vary from a misdemeanor of the first degree<sup>3</sup> up to a felony of the first degree with a possible minimum sentence of 15 years in prison and a \$200,000 fine.<sup>4</sup> Paraphernalia<sup>5</sup> that is sold, manufactured, used, or possessed with the intent to be used to plant, propagate, cultivate, grow, harvest, manufacture, compound, convert, produce, process, prepare, test, analyze, pack, repack, store, contain, conceal, inject, ingest, inhale, or otherwise introduce into the human body a controlled substance is also prohibited and carries criminal penalties ranging from a misdemeanor of the first degree to felony of the third degree.<sup>6</sup>

### Medical Marijuana in Florida – the Necessity Defense

Despite the fact that the use, possession, and sale of marijuana is prohibited by state law, Florida courts have found that circumstances can necessitate medical use of marijuana and circumvent the application of any criminal penalties. The necessity defense was successfully applied in a marijuana possession case in *Jenks v. State*<sup>7</sup> where the First District Court of Appeal found that “section 893.03 does not preclude the defense of medical necessity” for the use of marijuana if the defendant:

- Did not intentionally bring about the circumstance which precipitated the unlawful act;
- Could not accomplish the same objective using a less offensive alternative available; and
- The evil sought to be avoided was more heinous than the unlawful act.

In the cited case the defendants, a married couple, were suffering from uncontrollable nausea due to AIDS treatment and had testimony from their physician that he could find no effective alternative treatment. Under these facts, the First District found that the *Jenks* met the criteria for the necessity defense and ordered an acquittal of the charges of cultivating cannabis and possession of drug paraphernalia.

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<sup>1</sup> s. 893.02(c), F.S.

<sup>2</sup> s. 893.03(c)7. and 37., F.S.

<sup>3</sup> For possessing or delivering less than 20 grams. See s. 893.13(3) and (6)(b), F.S.

<sup>4</sup> Trafficking in more than 25 pounds, or 300 plants, of cannabis is a felony of the first degree with a minimum sentence that varies from 3 to 15 years in prison depending on the amount of cannabis. See s. 893.135(1)(a), F.S.

<sup>5</sup> As defined in s. 893.145, F.S.

<sup>6</sup> s. 893.147, F.S.

<sup>7</sup> *Jenks v. State*, 582 So. 2d 676, June 13, 1991.

## Medical Marijuana Laws in Other States

Currently, 20 states and the District of Columbia<sup>8</sup> have some form of law that permits the use of marijuana for medicinal purposes. These laws vary widely in detail but most are similar in that they touch on several recurring themes. Most state laws include the following in some form:

- A list of medical conditions for which a practitioner can recommend the use of medical marijuana to a patient.
  - Nearly every state has a list of medical conditions though the particular conditions vary from state to state. Most states also include a way to expand the list either by allowing a state agency or board to add medical conditions to the list or by including a “catch-all” phrase.<sup>9</sup> Most states require that the patient receive certification from at least one, but often two, physicians designating that the patient has a qualifying condition before the patient may be issued an ID card.
- Provisions for the patient to designate one or more caregivers who can possess the medical marijuana and assist the patient in preparing and using the medical marijuana.
  - The number of caregivers allowed and the qualifications to become a caregiver vary from state to state. Most states allow one or two caregivers and require that they be at least 21 years of age and, typically, cannot be the patient’s physician. Caregivers are generally allowed to purchase or grow marijuana for the patient, be in possession of the allowed quantity of marijuana, and aid the patient in using the marijuana, but are strictly prohibited from using the marijuana themselves.
- A required identification card for the patient, caregiver, or both that is typically issued by a state agency.
- A registry of people who have been issued an ID card.
- A method for registered patients and caregivers to obtain medical marijuana.
  - There are two general methods by which patients can obtain medical marijuana: either they must self-cultivate the marijuana in their homes, or the state allows specified marijuana points of sale or dispensaries. The regulations governing such dispensaries vary widely.
- General restrictions on where medical marijuana may be used.
  - Typically, medical marijuana may not be used in public places, such as parks and on buses, or in areas where there are more stringent restrictions placed on the use of drugs, such as in or around schools or in prisons.

## State Medical Marijuana Laws and Their Interaction with the Federal Government

The Federal Controlled Substances Act lists Marijuana as a schedule 1 drug with no accepted medical uses. Under federal law possession, manufacturing, and distribution of marijuana is a

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<sup>8</sup> These states include Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois (effective 2014), Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington. California was the first to establish a medical marijuana program in 1996 and Illinois was the most recent state to pass medical marijuana legislation in August of 2013. Illinois legislation became effective in January, 2014. See <http://www.ncsl.org/issues-research/health/state-medical-marijuana-laws.aspx>. Last visited on Mar. 7, 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Such as in California’s law that includes “any other chronic or persistent medical symptom that either: Substantially limits the ability of the person to conduct one or more major life activities as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, or if not alleviated, may cause serious harm to the patient's safety or physical or mental health.”

crime.<sup>10</sup> Although state medical marijuana laws protect patients from prosecution for the legitimate use of marijuana under the guidelines established in that state, such laws do not protect individuals from prosecution under federal law should the federal government choose to enforce those laws.

In August of 2013, the United States Justice Department (USDOJ) issued a publication entitled “Smart on Crime: Reforming the Criminal Justice System for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.”<sup>11</sup> This document details the federal government’s changing stance on low-level drug crimes announcing a “change in Department of Justice charging policies so that certain people who have committed low-level, nonviolent drug offenses, who have no ties to large-scale organizations, gangs, or cartels will no longer be charged with offenses that impose draconian mandatory minimum sentences. Under the revised policy, these people would instead receive sentences better suited to their individual conduct rather than excessive prison terms more appropriate for violent criminals or drug kingpins.” In addition, the USDOJ published on August 29, 2013, a memorandum with the subject “Guidance regarding Marijuana Enforcement.” This memorandum made clear that the USDOJ considered small-scale marijuana use to be a state matter which the states may choose to punish or not, and, while larger operations would fall into the purview of the USDOJ, those operations that adhere to state laws legalizing marijuana in states that have robust regulatory systems for such laws would be far less likely to come under federal scrutiny.<sup>12</sup> These announcements generally indicate the USDOJ’s relative unwillingness to prosecute such cases leaving such prosecutions largely up to state authorities.

### **Tetrahydrocannabinol**

Tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, is the major psychoactive constituent of marijuana. The potency of marijuana, in terms of psychoactivity, is dependent on THC concentration and is usually expressed as percent of THC per dry weight of material.

Average THC concentration in marijuana is 1-5 percent and the form of marijuana known as *sinsemilla* is derived from the unpollinated female cannabis plant and is preferred for its high THC content (up to 17 percent THC). Recreational doses are highly variable and users often titer their own dose. A single intake of smoke from a pipe or joint is called a hit (approximately 1/20th of a gram). The lower the potency or THC content the more hits are needed to achieve the desired effects.<sup>13</sup>

Marinol is a currently approved drug<sup>14</sup> that consists of a man-made form of THC known as dornabinol.<sup>15</sup> Marinol is used to treat anorexia associated with weight loss in patients with AIDS and nausea and vomiting associated with cancer chemotherapy in patients who have failed to

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<sup>10</sup> The punishments vary depending on the amount of marijuana and the intent with which the marijuana is possessed. See <http://www.fda.gov/regulatoryinformation/legislation/ucm148726.htm#cntlsbd>. Last visited Mar. 7, 2014.

<sup>11</sup> See <http://www.justice.gov/ag/smart-on-crime.pdf>. Last visited on Mar. 7, 2014.

<sup>12</sup> See USDOJ memo on “Guidance Regarding Marijuana Enforcement”, Aug. 29, 2013, found at <http://www.justice.gov/iso/opa/resources/3052013829132756857467.pdf>, last visited on Mar. 7, 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Drugs and Human Performance Fact Sheet for Cannabis / Marijuana, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, found at <http://www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/research/job185drugs/cannabis.htm>, last visited on Mar. 7, 2014.

<sup>14</sup> Approved by the US Food and Drug Administration.

<sup>15</sup> See <http://www.marinol.com/about-marinol.cfm>, last visited on Mar. 7, 2014.

adequately respond to conventional antiemetic treatments. Marinol has a variety of side-effects including a cannabinoid dose-related “high.”<sup>16</sup>

### **Cannabidiol**

Cannabidiol, or CBD, is another cannabinoid that is found in marijuana and, although THC has psychoactive effects, CBD and other cannabinoids are not known to cause intoxication.<sup>17</sup> There is some evidence that shows that CBD is effective in treating seizure disorders,<sup>18,19</sup> although much of this evidence is anecdotal. Currently, the drug Epidiolex, which is a liquid form of highly purified CBD extract, has been approved by the FDA in November 2013, as an orphan drug<sup>20</sup> that may be used to treat Dravet syndrome.<sup>21,22</sup>

### **III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

Section 1 of the bill creates s. 456.60, F.S., to allow the compassionate use of low-THC marijuana. The bill:

- Defines the terms:
  - “Dispensing organization” to mean an organization approved by the DOH to cultivate, process, and dispense low-THC marijuana;
  - “Low-THC marijuana” to mean a substance that contains no more than .5 percent of any THC and at least 15 percent of CBD and which is dispensed from a dispensing organization;
  - “Medical use” to mean the administration of the ordered amount of low-THC marijuana with the exception of possession, use, or administration by smoking and the transfer of low-THC marijuana to a person other than the qualified patient or his or her legal representative;
  - “Qualified patient” to mean a Florida resident who has been added to the compassionate use registry by a Florida licensed physician; and
  - “Smoking” to mean burning or igniting a substance and inhaling the smoke. The term smoking does not include the use of a vaporizer.
- Allows Florida licensed physicians to order low-THC marijuana for a patient suffering from a physical medical condition, or treatment for a medical condition, that chronically produces symptoms of seizure or severe and persistent muscle spasms. The physician may only order low-THC marijuana if:
  - The physician has tried alternate treatment options and there are no satisfactory alternative treatments to eliminate the patient’s symptoms;

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<sup>16</sup> Marinol prescribing information, see [http://www.rxabbvie.com/pdf/marinol\\_PL.pdf](http://www.rxabbvie.com/pdf/marinol_PL.pdf), last visited on Mar. 7, 2014.

<sup>17</sup> GW Pharmaceuticals, see <http://www.gwpharm.com/FAQ.aspx>, last visited on Mar. 7, 2014.

<sup>18</sup> See <http://www.cnn.com/2013/08/07/health/charlotte-child-medical-marijuana/>

<sup>19</sup> See also the presentation to the Florida House Criminal Justice Subcommittee on the Charlotte’s Web strain of marijuana on Jan 9, 2014.

<sup>20</sup> An orphan drug is defined as a drug that is intended for the safe and effective treatment, diagnosis, or prevention of rare diseases/disorders that affect fewer than 200,000 people in the U.S., or that affect more than 200,000 persons but are not expected to recover the costs of developing and marketing a treatment drug. See <http://www.fda.gov/forindustry/DevelopingProductsforRareDiseasesConditions/default.htm>., last visited on Mar. 10, 2014.

<sup>21</sup> See <http://www.gwpharm.com/LGS%20Orphan%20Designation.aspx>, last visited on Mar. 7, 2014.

<sup>22</sup> Dravet syndrome is a rare form of childhood epilepsy. See [http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/dravet\\_syndrome/dravet\\_syndrome.htm](http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/dravet_syndrome/dravet_syndrome.htm), last visited on Mar. 7, 2014.

- The patient is a permanent resident of Florida.
- The physician has treated the patient for his or her symptoms for at least 6 months;
- The physician, along with a second physician for patients under the age of 18, determines the risk of ordering low-THC marijuana are reasonable;
- The physician registers as the orderer for the named patient on the registry, updates the registry with the order's contents, and deactivates the patient's registration when treatment is discontinued;
- The physician maintains a patient treatment plan that includes the dose, route of administration, planned duration, and monitoring of the patient's symptoms and other indicators of tolerance or reaction to the low-THC marijuana; and
- The physician submits the treatment plan quarterly to the University Of Florida College Of Pharmacy for research on the safety and efficacy of the low-THC marijuana.
- Requires the DOH to:
  - Create a secure, electronic, and online registry for the registration of physicians and patients which must be able to be accessed by law enforcement and the dispensing organization in order to verify patient orders. The dispensing organization must be able to record the low-THC marijuana dispensed and the registry must prevent an active registration of a patient by multiple physicians.
  - Authorize at least one, but no more than four, dispensing organizations to ensure reasonable statewide accessibility and availability of low-THC marijuana as necessary. The DOH must develop an application form and impose initial and biennial renewal fees that are sufficient to cover the costs of administering their responsibilities under this section. An applicant for approval as a dispensing organization must be able to show:
    - The technical and technological ability to cultivate and produce low-THC marijuana;
    - The ability to secure the premises, resources, and personnel necessary to operate;
    - The ability to maintain accountability of all marijuana related products and to prevent diversion of those substances;
    - An infrastructure reasonably located to dispense low-THC marijuana statewide or regionally as determined by the DOH;
    - The financial ability to maintain operations for the duration of the 2-year cycle;
    - That all owners, managers, and employees have been fingerprinted and passed a level II background screening; and,
    - Any additional criteria determined by the DOH to be needed to safely implement the section.
  - Monitor physician registration and ordering of low-THC marijuana in order to be able to take disciplinary action as needed.
- Requires a dispensing organization to maintain compliance with all listed criteria for approval at all times and to verify before dispensing any low-THC marijuana that a patient has an active registration and that the patient's order matches the one recorded on the registry and has not already been filled. When the dispensing organization dispenses any low-THC marijuana it must record the date, time, quantity, and form of the marijuana dispensed.
- Creates exceptions from all other sections of law for:
  - Qualified patients and their legal representatives to purchase, acquire, and possess for that patient's medical use up to the ordered amount of low-THC marijuana;
  - Dispensing organizations, including their owners, managers, and employees to acquire, possess, cultivate, and dispose of excess product in reasonable quantities to produce low-

THC marijuana and for such organizations to possess, process, and dispense low-THC marijuana. The bill also clarifies that dispensing organizations and their owners, managers, and employees are not subject to licensure and regulation under ch. 465, F.S., relating to pharmacies.

**Section 2** of the bill amends s. 893.02, F.S., to exempt any plant of the genus Cannabis, its seeds, or its extracted resin or any compound, manufacture, salt, derivative, mixture, or preparation of such a plant, its seeds, or resin that contains .5 percent or less of THC and more than 15 percent of CBD from the definition of “Cannabis” if it is possessed or used in conformance with the newly created s. 456.60, F.S. This exemption in effect legalizes the plants, seeds, resins, and products that conform to the exemption.

**Section 3** of the bill establishes an effective date of July 1, 2014.

#### **IV. Constitutional Issues:**

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

#### **V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

CS/SB 1030 may have a positive fiscal impact on the private sector organizations that are approved by the DOH to become dispensing organizations.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The DOH will require \$120,000 to fund the creation of the compassionate use registry and will require further funds to maintain the registry, as well as approve and monitor the dispensing organizations.<sup>23</sup> However, these costs should be funded from the initial and license renewal fees charged to the dispensing organizations.

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<sup>23</sup> DOH analysis of SB 1030, on file with Health Policy Committee staff.

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) states that the definition change to the term “cannabis” in section 2 of the bill will require the FDLE to analyze all cannabis samples confiscated in order to prove that it is not exempt under the new definition. To do so will create an increased workload and the FDLE will require 25 new Crime Lab Analysts and at least 10 additional Gas Chromatographs to perform the additional analyses. The FDLE will incur an estimated \$1,832,700 recurring costs for the new personnel and a one-time cost of \$650,000 for new Gas Chromatographs.

Section 1 of the bill may generate additional revenue for the FDLE due to an increase in the number of criminal history checks performed. The current cost for a state record check is \$24.<sup>24</sup> The amount of revenue generated will likely be minimal.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

Consideration should be given to creating a public records exemption for the personal identifying information in the compassionate use registry.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends section 893.02 of the Florida Statutes.  
This bill creates section 456.60 of the Florida Statutes.

**IX. Additional Information:**

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**  
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

**CS by Health Policy on March 11, 2014:**

The CS amends SB 1030 to:

- Change the name of “medical-grade marijuana” to “low-THC marijuana” throughout the bill;
- Amend a typo in the definition of “low-THC marijuana”; and,
- Change “prescribe” to “order” throughout the bill to avoid a conflict with other statutes that define “prescriptions” as being filled at a pharmacy.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.

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This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill’s introducer or the Florida Senate.

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<sup>24</sup> FDLE analysis of SB 1030, on file with Health Policy Committee staff.