

2025 -- S 0847

LC001984

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

A N A C T

RELATING TO FOOD AND DRUGS -- COMPASSIONATE ACCESS TO MEDICAL  
CANNABIS ACT

Introduced By: Senators Murray, Acosta, Bell, Thompson, Euer, McKenney, Lauria, and  
Valverde

Date Introduced: March 19, 2025

Referred To: Senate Health & Human Services

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 21 of the General Laws entitled "FOOD AND DRUGS" is hereby  
2 amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 28.12

4 COMPASSIONATE ACCESS TO MEDICAL CANNABIS ACT

5 **21-28.12-1. Short title.**

6 This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Compassionate Access to Medical  
7 Cannabis Act"

8 **21-28.12-2. Legislative purpose.**

9 It is the purpose of this chapter to support the ability of a terminally ill patient to safely use  
10 medicinal cannabis within specified healthcare facilities in compliance with the terms of the  
11 Edward O. Hawkins and Thomas C. Slater Medical Marijuana act set forth in chapter 28.6 in title  
12 21.

13 **21-28.12-3. Definitions.**

14 As used in this chapter, the following words and terms shall have the following meanings  
15 unless the context shall clearly indicate another or different meaning or intent:

16 (1) "Healthcare facility" has the same meaning as defined in § 23-15-2. "Healthcare  
17 facility" does not include a chemical dependency recovery facility.

18 (2) "Medicinal cannabis" means cannabis or a cannabis product used in compliance with

1 [the Edward O. Hawkins and Thomas C. Slater Medical Marijuana act set forth in chapter 28.6 of](#)  
2 [title 21.](#)

3 [\(3\) “Patient” means an individual who is terminally ill.](#)

4 [\(4\) “Terminally ill” means a medical condition resulting in a prognosis of cessation of life](#)  
5 [in one year or less, if the disease follows its natural course.](#)

6 **21-28.12-4. Terms and conditions to use medical cannabis.**

7 [\(a\) A healthcare facility shall permit patient use of medical cannabis and shall do all of the](#)  
8 [following:](#)

9 [\(1\) Prohibit smoking or vaping as methods to use medicinal cannabis;](#)

10 [\(2\) Include the use of medicinal cannabis within the patient’s medical records;](#)

11 [\(3\) Require a patient to provide the healthcare facility with a copy of the patient’s valid](#)  
12 [identification card, as described in §§ 3-8-6 or 3-8-6.1;](#)

13 [\(4\) Require a patient to provide the healthcare facility with a copy of their medical](#)  
14 [marijuana card or written documentation that the use of medicinal cannabis is recommended by a](#)  
15 [physician;](#)

16 [\(5\) Reasonably restrict the manner in which a patient stores and uses medicinal cannabis,](#)  
17 [including requiring the medicinal cannabis to be stored in a locked container, to ensure the safety](#)  
18 [of other patients, guests, and employees of the healthcare facility, compliance with other state laws,](#)  
19 [and the safe operations of the healthcare facility; and](#)

20 [\(6\) Develop and disseminate written guidelines pursuant to this chapter, for the use of](#)  
21 [medicinal cannabis within the healthcare facility.](#)

22 [\(b\) This section does not apply to a patient receiving emergency services and care.](#)

23 **21-28.12-5. Compliance with drug and medication requirements.**

24 [Notwithstanding the classification of medicinal cannabis as a Schedule I drug and any other](#)  
25 [law, health facilities permitting patient use of medicinal cannabis shall comply with drug and](#)  
26 [medication requirements applicable to Schedule II, III, and IV drugs and shall be subject to](#)  
27 [enforcement actions by the department of health.](#)

28 **21-28.12-6. Limited obligation of health facility.**

29 [This chapter does not require a healthcare facility to provide a patient with a](#)  
30 [recommendation to use medicinal cannabis or include medicinal cannabis in a patient’s discharge](#)  
31 [plan.](#)

32 **21-28.12-7. Compliance and limitation.**

33 [\(a\) Compliance with this chapter shall not be a condition for obtaining, retaining, or](#)  
34 [renewing a license as a healthcare facility.](#)

1           **(b) This chapter does not reduce, expand, or otherwise modify the laws restricting the**  
2 **cultivation, possession, distribution, or use of cannabis that may be otherwise applicable.**

3           **21-28.12-8. Federal authority.**

4           **(a) If a federal regulatory agency, the United States Department of Justice (US DOJ), or**  
5 **the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) takes one of the following actions,**  
6 **a healthcare facility may suspend compliance with §21-28.12-4 until the regulatory agency, the US**  
7 **DOJ, or CMS notifies the healthcare facility that it may resume permitting the use of medicinal**  
8 **cannabis within the facility:**

9           **(1) A federal regulatory agency or the US DOJ initiates enforcement action against a**  
10 **healthcare facility related to the facility’s compliance with a state-regulated medical marijuana**  
11 **program; and**

12           **(2) A federal regulatory agency, the US DOJ, or CMS issues a rule or otherwise provides**  
13 **notification to the healthcare facility that expressly prohibits the use of medical marijuana in**  
14 **healthcare facilities or otherwise prohibits compliance with a state-regulated medical marijuana**  
15 **program.**

16           **(b) This section does not permit a healthcare facility to prohibit patient use of medicinal**  
17 **cannabis due solely to the fact that cannabis is a Schedule I drug pursuant to the federal Uniform**  
18 **Controlled Substances Act, or other federal constraints on the use of medicinal cannabis that were**  
19 **in existence prior to the enactment of this chapter.**

20           **21-28.12-9. Severability.**

21           **If any clause, sentence, paragraph, section, or part of this chapter shall be adjudged by any**  
22 **court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, that judgment shall not affect, impair, or invalidate**  
23 **the remainder of the chapter but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph,**  
24 **section, or part directly involved in the controversy in which that judgment shall have been**  
25 **rendered.**

26           SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO FOOD AND DRUGS -- COMPASSIONATE ACCESS TO MEDICAL  
CANNABIS ACT

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1           This act would require certain healthcare facilities to allow a terminally ill patient's use of  
2 medicinal cannabis within the healthcare facility, subject to the following restrictions including:  
3 requiring a patient to provide the healthcare facility with an ID and a copy of their medical  
4 marijuana card or written documentation that the use of medicinal cannabis is recommended by a  
5 physician, and requiring a healthcare facility to restrict how a patient stores and uses medicinal  
6 cannabis to ensure the safety of other patients, guests, and employees of the healthcare facility. The  
7 act would also provide that compliance with the bill would not be a condition for obtaining,  
8 retaining, or renewing a license as a healthcare facility.

9           The act would authorize a healthcare facility to suspend compliance with these provisions  
10 if a federal agency takes specified actions.

11           This act would take effect upon passage.

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