



ANDY BESHEAR
GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE ORDER

Secretary of State
Frankfort
Kentucky

2026 – 318
June 2, 2026

In Kentucky we are reigniting the American Dream.

While that Dream starts with a job and lives in a home, it also means access to high quality, affordable health care.

Across the Commonwealth, our citizens who suffer from serious medical conditions deserve safer treatment options that can deliver relief.

Since December 2019, one of our healthcare priorities was ensuring Kentuckians with serious medical conditions have the medical freedom and access to choose safe, tested medical cannabis as an alternative to addictive opioids.

Medical cannabis is a term for derivatives of the Cannabis sp. plant that are used to control and ease symptoms caused by certain serious medical conditions. Cannabis sp. contains many active compounds. The best known are delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD).

On March 31, 2023, Governor Andy Beshear signed Senate Bill 47 into law. Effective January 1, 2025, qualified Kentuckians could legally use medical cannabis in accordance with KRS Chapter 218B and all administrative regulations thereunder.

On June 1, 2023, the Governor created the Kentucky Medical Cannabis Program, with the goal of ensuring Kentuckians suffering with serious medical conditions have safe access to tested medical cannabis products beginning January 1, 2025.

As of the date of this order, a total of 40 states plus the District of Columbia allow cannabis for medical use by qualified individuals. Recently, the United States Department of Justice's Drug Enforcement Administration placed medical cannabis products regulated by a state medical cannabis license in Schedule III of the Controlled Substances Act.

Since January 1, 2025, medical cannabis businesses have become licensed, inspected, and opened their doors for operations. Since December 2025, medical cannabis has been available for sale to medical cannabis cardholders.

Two weeks ago, researchers at the University of Kentucky published a study, which found that medical cannabis dispensaries have a notable association with significant reduction of opioid overdose.

In Kentucky, our description of qualifying conditions is confusing.

The language of KRS 218B.010(26) defined "qualifying medical condition" to mean "(a) Any type or form of cancer regardless of stage; (b) Chronic, severe, intractable, or debilitating pain; (c) Epilepsy or any other intractable seizure disorder; (d) Multiple sclerosis, muscle spasms, or spasticity; (e) Chronic nausea or cyclical vomiting syndrome that has proven resistant to other conventional medical treatments; (f) Post-traumatic stress disorder; ...".

Importantly, some qualifying medical conditions described above, such as "chronic nausea," "muscle spasms," and "chronic, severe, intractable, or debilitating pain," are also



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underlying symptoms of other serious medical conditions from which Kentuckians deserve safer options for relief.

Immediate clarification of the statutory definition of “qualifying medical condition” is necessary to prevent a substantial risk of denied or delayed access to safe, regulated medical cannabis for qualified individuals, and to ensure timely treatment.

As with previous executive orders regarding medical cannabis, I remain committed to providing relief to Kentuckians who suffer from serious medical conditions, as well as ensuring they have safe access to regulated medical cannabis under the new program.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Andy Beshear, Governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Kentucky Constitution and KRS 12.029, do hereby Declare, Order and Direct the following:

The following medical conditions have previously been recommended for express inclusion within the definition of “qualifying medical condition” by unanimous vote of the Kentucky Board of Physicians and Advisors. This board was created by statute, appointed by the state medical licensing boards, and confirmed by the Senate. These conditions are generally recognized to have at least one underlying symptom that is defined as a “qualifying medical condition” under KRS 218B.010(26):

1. Terminal Illness;
2. Sickle Cell Anemia;
3. Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS);
4. Parkinson’s Disease;
5. Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV);
6. Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS);
7. Huntington’s Disease;
8. Muscular Dystrophy;
9. Cachexia or Wasting Syndrome;
10. Crohn’s Disease;
11. Ulcerative Colitis;
12. Neuropathies;
13. Severe Arthritis;
14. Fibromyalgia; and
15. Glaucoma.

The Kentucky Office of Medical Cannabis is hereby directed to promulgate emergency and ordinary administrative regulations that will clarify that the definition of “qualifying medical condition” contained in KRS 218B.010(26) may encompass additional medical conditions, including those identified above, if an underlying symptom of those conditions is (1) expressly defined as a “qualifying medical condition” and (2) properly diagnosed by a medical cannabis practitioner or the medical cannabis practitioner properly confirms the diagnosis provided by another health care provider.

This Order shall be effective June 2, 2026.




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ANDY BESHEAR, Governor
Commonwealth of Kentucky

MICHAEL G. ADAMS
Secretary of State