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# Colorado Activists Turn In Signat Put Psychedelics Legalization And Therapeutic Psilocybin Program O



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By **Kyle Jaeger** 



Colorado activists announced on Monday that they have submitted what they believe more than enough signatures to place a measure on the state's ballot that would legalize psychedelics and create licensed psilocybin "healing centers" where people can use the substance for therapeutic purposes.



The Natural Medicine Colorado campaign, which is backed by the national New Approach said that it turned in 222,648 signatures to the secretary of state's office. Activists need 124,632 valid signatures to qualify for the ballot.

The measure would legalize possession of certain psychedelics, establish a therapeutic for supervised psilocybin treatment and provide a pathway for record sealing for prior convictions.

"This initiative would give Coloradans access to a new, promising, and research-based treatment option for PTSD, depression, anxiety, and other mental health challenges, in a careful, and beneficial way," Kevin Matthews, a designated representative for the initiative

who led the historic campaign to decriminalize psilocybin in Denver in 2019, said in a release.

“These medicines can be transformative for people who have suffered for years and seek to find help,” he said.

Activists were able to collect the significant number of signatures, which they have been independently verifying throughout the process, within about three months of being submitted by the state for circulation.

“The Natural Medicine Health Act puts the well-being of patients and communities first,” Kappel, chair of the Natural Medicine Colorado campaign, said. “It was purposefully designed with a multi-phase implementation process that sets clear safety rules, while allowing details of the regulatory structure to be developed by the community and regulators working together.”

### **Here’s what the Natural Medicine Health Act initiative would accomplish:**

Possession, use, cultivation and sharing of psilocybin, ibogaine, mescaline (not from peyote), DMT and psilocyn would be legalized for adults 21 and older, with an explicit possession limit. There would be no recreational sales component.

Under the proposal, the Department of Regulatory Agencies would be responsible for developing rules for a therapeutic psychedelics program where adults 21 and older would visit a licensed healing center to receive treatment under the guidance of a trained facilitator.

There would be a two-tiered regulatory model, where only psilocybin and psilocyn would be permitted for therapeutic use at licensed healing centers until June 2026. After that point, regulators could decide whether to also permit regulated therapeutic use of ibogaine and mescaline.

The decision to add additional substances to the program would be made by the Department of Regulatory Agencies in consultation with a new 15-member Natural Medicine Advisory Board that includes people who have experience with psychedelic medicine in a scientific and religious context.

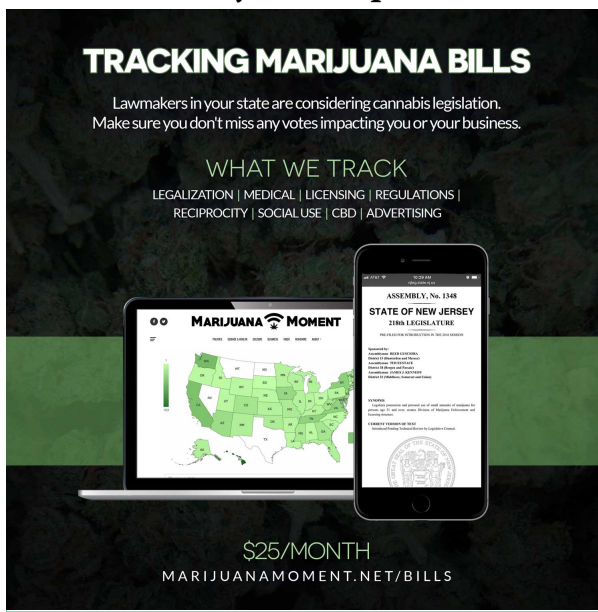
People who have completed their sentence for a conviction related to an offense legal under the act would be able to petition the courts for record sealing. If the objection from the district attorney, the court would need to automatically clear record.

“I am moved to lead this ballot initiative because my life’s work is to help alleviate suffering where I can and to remind people of how strong they really are,” Veronica Perez, co-designated representative for the measure, said. “The Natural Medicine Health Act is just that. So many people could finally get the help they need and are asking for.”

Matthews agreed, saying “every one of us knows someone struggling,” and “we simply turn our backs to the potential of this treatment and the people it could help.”

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Meanwhile, a separate campaign headed by Decriminalize Nature Colorado, which has an issue with some of the regulations prescribed in the Natural Medicine Colorado measure,

a competing initiative in January, and activists are also making headway in signature gathering.

That campaign's one-page measure would simply allow adults 21 and older to possess, cultivate, gift and deliver psilocybin, psilocyn, ibogaine, mescaline and DMT.

Further, the proposal says that it would be lawful to conduct psychedelics services for guidance, therapy and harm reduction and spiritual purposes with or without accepting payment. It would not be legal to sell any of the psychedelics, however.

Meanwhile, Colorado Gov. Jared Polis (D) was recently asked about the prospects of a psychedelics reform in the state, and he acknowledged that advocates are working to accomplish that policy change at the ballot and also said he supports the idea of decriminalizing the substances.

Earlier this month, Polis signed a bill to align state statute to legalize MDMA prescription and when the federal government ultimately permits such use.

Colorado is far from the only state where psychedelics legislation is advancing.

The leader of the New Jersey Senate filed a bill last week that would legalize the possible home cultivation and gifting of psilocybin mushrooms for adults 21 and older—with provisions that give adults even more freedoms for the psychedelic than are afforded by the state's current marijuana laws.

The governor of Connecticut signed a large-scale budget bill in May that includes provisions to set the state up to provide certain patients with access to psychedelic-assisted treatment of substances like MDMA and psilocybin.

Maryland's governor recently allowed a bill to go into law without his signature to create a state fund to provide "cost-free" access to psychedelics like psilocybin, MDMA and ketamine for military veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic injury.

A Massachusetts-based campaign, Bay Staters for National Medicine (BSNM), is also supporting a statewide reform push to force state lawmakers to file legislation to legalize entheogenic substances for therapeutic use and otherwise decriminalize certain psychedelics.



The Maine Senate approved a bill in April to to create a medical psilocybin program in the state, but the House of Representatives refused to go along.

Also that month, Georgia lawmakers advanced a bipartisan resolution that calls for the formation of a House study committee to investigate the therapeutic potential of psychedelics like psilocybin and make recommendations for reforms.

The governor of Utah signed a bill in March to create a task force to study and make recommendations on the therapeutic potential of psychedelic drugs and possible regulations for their lawful use.

A Missouri House committee also held a hearing that month on a GOP-led bill to legislate a wide range of psychedelics for therapeutic use at designated care facilities while further decriminalizing low-level possession in general.

The Washington State legislature recently sent a budget bill to the governor's desk that includes a proposal to direct \$200,000 in funding to support a new workgroup to study the possibility of legalizing psilocybin services in the state, including the idea of using current marijuana regulatory systems to track psychedelic mushrooms.

In March, the Hawaii Senate approved a bill to set up a state working group to study the therapeutic benefits of psilocybin mushrooms and develop a “long-term” plan to ensure the psychedelic is accessible for medical use for adults 21 and older.

Also that month, the Oklahoma House of Representatives passed a bill to decriminalize low-level possession of psilocybin and promote research into the therapeutic potential of psychedelics.

Rhode Island lawmakers introduced a pair of drug decriminalization bills in March—one focused on psilocybin and buprenorphine that would authorize doctors to prescribe psychedelic mushrooms.

An Oregon Senate committee also recently advanced a bill to ensure that equity is built into the state's historic therapeutic psilocybin program that's actively being implemented following voter approval in 2020.

A bill to decriminalize a wide array of psychedelics in Virginia was taken up by a House Delegates panel in January, only to be pushed off until 2023. A separate Senate proposal

decriminalize psilocybin alone was later defeated in a key committee.

California Sen. Scott Wiener (D) told Marijuana Moment in a recent interview that his bill to legalize psychedelics possession stands a 50/50 chance of reaching the governor's year. It already cleared the full Senate and two Assembly committees during the first of the two-year session.

Washington State lawmakers also introduced legislation in January that would legalize the bill calls "supported psilocybin experiences" by adults 21 and older.

New Hampshire lawmakers filed measures to decriminalize psilocybin and all drugs.

Legislation was also enacted by the Texas legislature last year requiring the state to study the medical risks and benefits of psilocybin, MDMA and ketamine for military veterans in partnership with Baylor College of Medicine and a military-focused medical center.

At the congressional level, bipartisan lawmakers sent a letter to DEA in January, urging the agency allow terminally ill patients to use psilocybin as an investigational treatment without the fear of federal prosecution.

Activists and patients were recently arrested at the DEA headquarters after engaging in disobedience during a protest over the agency's refusal to provide a waiver granting terminally ill patients access to psilocybin under Right to Try laws.

## Louisiana Governor Signs Bill Providing Medical Marijuana Workplace Protections For State Employees

The governor of Louisiana has signed a bill to provide workplace protections for most state employees who are registered medical marijuana patients. The legislation from Rep. Mandie Landry (D) is one of roughly a dozen cannabis measures that Gov. John Bel Edwards (D) has signed in recent days, but it's one that advocates have been ...  
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Kyle Jaeger is Marijuana Moment's Sacramento-based senior editor. His work has also appeared in High Times, VICE and attn.

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