

Licensed Pharmacies in Uruguay Sell Marijuana at a Dollar a Gram



Montevideo, May 5 (RHC) -- Uruguayan authorities have revealed how marijuana will be produced and sold legally in the country following the approval of the bill last December. Licensed pharmacies will sell the drug for approximately one U.S. dollar a gram with consumers allowed 40g a month.

The bill, which comes into force on Tuesday, specifies that each household may grow up to six cannabis plants, at an annual production of 480 grams. The same restrictions that apply for tobacco and alcohol will be implemented for marijuana. Drivers caught "smoke-driving" will be subject to the same penalties as those under the influence of alcohol. The same applies to those caught smoking while on the job.

Pharmacies are not forced to sell cannabis and those interested must register. Each individual wanting to purchase the weed in those outlets must previously register (thus excluding non residents), but at the moment of actually buying does not have to identify himself since this will be done through an electronic system. Purchases are in envelopes with a maximum of 10 grams.

The head of Uruguay's Drugs Board, Diego Canepa, said the government expected to launch the licensing process for companies interested in growing the drug within the next 15 days.

The bill is highly controversial in Uruguay with the government arguing that the bill will help tackle drug cartels, but critics say it will expose more people to drugs. A recent public opinion poll showed a majority of Uruguayans were against legalizing cannabis, but a significant percentage also admitted that the bill should be given a chance to see if it effectively works.

A recent UN report criticized the legalization of drugs, saying it posed a health risk.

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