

Puerto Rico Legalizes Medicinal Marijuana Use



San Juan, May 4 (teleSUR-RHC) --Puerto Ricans will now be able to legally use medicinal marijuana after Puerto Rico's governor signed an executive order on Sunday authorizing the drug use for medicinal purposes.

Governor Alejandro Garcia Padilla described the move as a “significant step” for Puerto Rico in terms of public health and overall quality of life, offering a new treatment option for patients suffering certain ailments.

While the new order went into immediate effect, it remains unclear which specific marijuana uses and derivatives will be authorized. Garcia said the government will soon release these details. A report from Puerto Rico's health secretary on the implementation and outcomes of the new rule is also expected in three months.

The report may point to further steps. Countries in Latin America are increasingly moving to decriminalize drug use, despite the ongoing U.S. “war on drugs” in the region. Chile harvested its first crop of medicinal marijuana last month, and Jamaica legalized small-scale pot possession and cultivation for personal use earlier this year.

Legal recreational cannabis consumption and sale in Uruguay has made the country a global leader in progressive drug policy. Medicinal marijuana is also legal in 23 U.S. states.

Medical cannabis has a variety of uses including treating chronic pain and illnesses such as multiple sclerosis and HIV/AIDS, as well as lessening the adverse effects experienced during chemotherapy. For medicinal purposes, cannabis and its derivatives can be smoked, eaten, taken as a pill, or applied topically.

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