

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

H.B. 984
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HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE BILL DRH10361-NL-72B

Short Title: Regulate Research of Medical Cannabis.

(Public)

Sponsors: Representative Belk.

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT PERMITTING CANNABIS MEDICAL RESEARCH STUDIES.

3 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

4 SECTION 1. G.S. 90-94.1 reads as rewritten:

5 "§ 90-94.1. Exemption for use or possession of hemp extract.cannabis.

6 (a) ~~As used in this section, "hemp extract" means an extract from a cannabis plant, or a~~
7 ~~mixture or preparation containing cannabis plant material, that has all of the following~~
8 ~~characteristics:~~

9 (1) ~~Is composed of less than nine-tenths of one percent (0.9%)~~
10 ~~tetrahydrocannabinol by weight.~~

11 (2) ~~Is composed of at least five percent (5%) cannabidiol by weight.~~

12 (3) ~~Contains no other psychoactive substance.~~

13 (a1) As used in this section, "cannabis" has the same meaning as "marijuana" in
14 G.S. 90-87.

15 (b) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Chapter, an individual may possess or
16 use ~~hemp extract, cannabis~~ and is not subject to the penalties described in this Chapter, if the
17 individual satisfies all of the following criteria:

18 (1) ~~Possesses or uses the hemp extract only to treat intractable epilepsy, as defined~~
19 ~~in G.S. 90-113.101.cannabis as a participant in a registered research study, as~~
20 ~~defined in G.S. 90-113.161, if the quantity of usable cannabis possessed does~~
21 ~~not exceed an adequate supply, as determined by the institution conducting~~
22 ~~the research study.~~

23 (2) ~~Possesses, in close proximity to the hemp extract, a certificate of analysis that~~
24 ~~indicates the hemp extract's ingredients, including its percentages of~~
25 ~~tetrahydrocannabinol and cannabidiol by weight.cannabis, a written~~
26 ~~certification, as defined in G.S. 90-113.161.~~

27 (3) ~~Is a caregiver, as defined in G.S. 90-113.101.G.S. 90-113.161.~~

28 (c) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Chapter, an individual who possesses
29 ~~hemp extract cannabis~~ lawfully under this section may administer ~~hemp extract cannabis~~ to
30 another person under the individual's care and is not subject to the penalties described in this
31 Chapter for administering the ~~hemp extract cannabis~~ to the person if the individual is the person's
32 caregiver, as defined in ~~G.S. 90-113.101.G.S. 90-113.161.~~

33 (d) Any individual who possesses or uses ~~hemp extract, cannabis~~, as defined under this
34 section, shall dispose of ~~all residual oil from the extract~~ any unused portions at a secure collection
35 box managed by a law enforcement agency. No criminal penalty shall attach for any violation of
36 this subsection."



1 SECTION 2. Chapter 90 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new Article
2 to read:

3 "Article 5I.

4 "Cannabis Treatment Research Act.

5 **"§ 90-113.160. Short title.**

6 (a) This act may be cited as the "North Carolina Cannabis Treatment Research Act."

7 (b) The purpose of this act is to regulate the research of cannabis as a treatment for
8 medical conditions.

9 **"§ 90-113.161. Definitions.**

10 The following definitions apply in this Article:

11 (1) Cannabis. – Has the same meaning as "marijuana" in G.S. 90-87 and refers to
12 quantities of 1.5 ounces or less.

13 (2) Caregiver. – An individual that is at least 18 years of age and a resident of
14 North Carolina who is a parent, legal guardian, or custodian of a patient and
15 is registered with the Department of Health and Human Services under
16 G.S. 90-113.162 who possesses a written statement dated and signed by a
17 physician that states all of the following:

18 a. The patient has been examined and is under the care of the physician.

19 b. The patient is participating in a registered cannabis research study.

20 (3) Database. – The Cannabis Treatment Research database, established by the
21 Department of Health and Human Services pursuant to this Article.

22 (4) Department. – The Department of Health and Human Services.

23 (5) Patient. – A person who has been diagnosed by a physician with one or more
24 medical conditions.

25 (6) Physician. – A person licensed under Article 1 of Chapter 90 of the General
26 Statutes who is in good standing to practice medicine in this State.

27 (7) Registered research study. – A study conducted by a research institution and
28 registered in the database.

29 (8) Research institution. – A hospital, university, laboratory, pharmaceutical
30 manufacturer, or private medical research corporation that has registered with
31 the Department to conduct cannabis research.

32 (9) Written certification. – A statement in a patient's medical records or a
33 statement signed by a physician with whom the patient has a bona fide
34 physician-patient relationship indicating that, in the physician's professional
35 opinion, the patient has a medical condition and the potential health benefits
36 of the medical use of cannabis would likely outweigh the health risks for the
37 patient.

38 **"§ 90-113.162. Cannabis Treatment Research database; departmental duties.**

39 (a) The Department shall create a secure and electronic Cannabis Treatment Research
40 database registry for the registration of research institutions, physicians, caregivers, and patients
41 as provided by this Article. All caregivers shall be required to register with the Department. Law
42 enforcement agencies are authorized to contact the Department to confirm a caregiver's
43 registration. The database shall consist of the following information to be provided by the
44 caregivers at the time of registration:

45 (1) The name and address of the caregiver.

46 (2) The name and address of the caregiver's patient.

47 (3) The name, address, and contact information for the institution conducting the
48 cannabis research study.

49 (b) It is the responsibility of the institution conducting the research study to update the
50 Department if caregiver or patient contact information changes.

51 **"§ 90-113.163. Immunity for institutions; confidentiality.**

1 (a) On a case-by-case basis, research institutions may approve of dispensation to a
2 registered caregiver, as approved by this Article, cannabis acquired from another jurisdiction.

3 (b) Research institutions who approve of dispensation of cannabis to a registered
4 caregiver, as approved by this Article, shall inform the registered caregiver of the requirement
5 that disposal must be done at a secure collection box pursuant to G.S. 90-94.1.

6 (c) Research institutions and their employees shall not be subject to arrest or prosecution,
7 penalized or disciplined in any manner, or denied any right or privilege for researching the use
8 of cannabis or providing a written certification for the use of cannabis pursuant to this Article.

9 (d) The identities of the caregivers, patients, and research institutions reported to the
10 Department pursuant to this Article are confidential and are not matters of public record.
11 However, this information may be provided to law enforcement agencies pursuant to
12 G.S. 90-113.162.

13 **"§ 90-113.164. North Carolina Cannabis Research Program.**

14 (a) It is the intent of the General Assembly that any physician who issues a written
15 certification to a patient be permitted to participate in objective scientific research with persons
16 registered under G.S. 90-113.162 regarding the administration of cannabis as part of medical
17 treatment.

18 (b) The scientific research conducted under this Article may involve the development of
19 quality control, purity, and labeling standards for cannabis; sound advice and recommendations
20 on the best practices for the safe and efficient medical use of cannabis; and analysis of genetic
21 and healing properties of the many varied strains of cannabis to determine which strains may be
22 best suited for a particular medical condition or treatment.

23 (c) A research institution, physician, or person registered to conduct research under
24 G.S. 90-113.162 shall not be subject to arrest or prosecution, or penalized in any manner, or
25 denied any right or privilege for researching the use of cannabis or providing written certification
26 for the use of cannabis pursuant to this section."

27 **SECTION 3.** The provisions of this act are severable. If any provision of this act is
28 held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the invalidity shall not affect other provisions
29 of this act which can be given effect without the invalid provision.

30 **SECTION 4.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2025, and applies to offenses
31 committed on or after that date.