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Medical marijuana dispensaries may visit East Coast

Authorized patients benefit from obtaining government regulated drug

Carla Aponte

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Marijuana has become one of the most widely used recreational drugs, the debate over whether or not to legalize, decriminalize or provide medical marijuana has grown significantly over the years.

According to [cnn.com](#), in 1996, California was the first state to approve the use of medical marijuana.

[MedicalMarijuanaProCon.org](#) said 12 states have also created laws legalizing marijuana for patients who qualify, the latest one being New Mexico in 2007.



Not only is California making marijuana legal, it is also making the drug easy to obtain. USA Today reported Marijuana vending machines are offering a quick fix for those with authorized medical and prepaid cards. In order to ensure people aside from patients are not taking advantage of the machines, fingerprints will also be tested.

One of the machines, which will operate and dispense marijuana around the clock, is located at the

Herbal Nutrition Center located in Los Angeles. According to The Guardian, the center is one of two that offers legal marijuana dispensary through a green colored machine.

The vending machines, dubbed Prescription Vending Machines (PVM), will not dispense more than an ounce each week. Each purchase will offer a registered customer either one eighth or two eighths of an ounce. By eliminating the vendor, the drugs are sold roughly \$20 cheaper than if they were obtained at a pharmacy. Once the card and fingerprints are verified, a bright green envelope containing marijuana is dropped down a slot.

The website for the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML) includes a state guide outlining marijuana laws and informing readers of differences of each state's drug laws. The laws in California are considered more lenient than New York, in regards to either possessing or selling marijuana.

If any Californian is in possession of 28.5 grams or less, it is considered a misdemeanor, with a \$100 fine and no incarceration. In the state of New York, possession of 25 grams or less, at first offense, is a \$100 fine with no incarceration. This, however, is considered a civil citation. The second offense does not lead to incarceration, but does include a civil citation and a \$200 fine. The third time, one will either be sent to jail for five days or pay a \$250 fine for committing a misdemeanor. More than 28.5 grams in California will result in a misdemeanor, six months of jail time and a \$500 fine.

The state of New York has five different laws when it comes to possessing more than 25 grams of marijuana. One can go to jail from three months to 15 years and be fined up to \$5,000, with felony charges.

Even though the state of New York has harsher rules in comparison to California, Albany, New York passed one of its first legislative hurdles in 2004 that would legalize medical marijuana, according to StopTheDrugWar.org. In 2007, Governor Eliot Spitzer of Albany said he was open to the idea of medical marijuana.

New York has had some history involving medical marijuana. According to thevillagevoice.com, "Between 1982 and 1989, the New York State Department of Health handed out almost 6,000 joints, to more than 200 people. Eventually the availability of Marinol capsules-which contain THC, the active ingredient in marijuana-decreased the demand for the cigarettes." However, the program was shut down.

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