

How Cannabis Laws Are Changing To Recognize Veterans' Mental Needs

Veterans often struggle with mental health problems. Medical marijuana has brought relief to many veterans, but what do the laws look like on cannabis.

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Veterans often struggle with mental health problems. [Medical marijuana and cannabidiol \(CBD\)](#) have brought relief to many of these brave men and women, but the laws are not always congruent with these cannabis-derived treatments. We examine how some marijuana laws are changing to accommodate these needs and why so many veterans turn to weed to help manage their mental health symptoms.

Veterans Find PTSD Relief With Marijuana

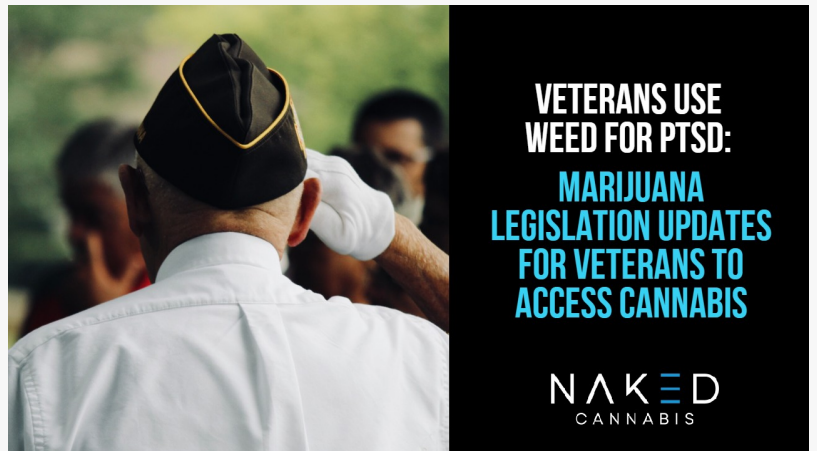
The [National Center For Post Traumatic Stress Disorder](#) (PTSD) estimates that approximately 30 out of every 100 (or 30%) of Vietnam Veterans have had PTSD in their lifetime. This is an alarming statistic and has caused veterans worldwide to suffer from devastating symptoms that can include flashbacks, nightmares, and severe anxiety.

And that's exactly what happened to Adam Smith, a former beret who spent 17 years in the US Army and special forces fighting terrorists and drug cartels. Smith, like many other veterans, found himself having suicidal thoughts and stated in an article published by [High Green News](#) that, "The bottom of this hole was me sitting on a couch with a pistol in my mouth." Smith, who suffered multiple past brain injuries during his time in uniform, eventually turned to medical marijuana to help him get a good night's sleep. After using it medicinally over a period of time he noticed it began to help not only with his sleep, but also alleviated his joint pains, and reduced a



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Marijuana Legislation Updates for Veterans to Access Cannabis

terrible feeling of always being “switched on”.

Smith represents one of the millions of veterans that suffer from PTSD. And, so far only pharmaceutical drugs are approved to treat the debilitating symptoms that come with PTSD. Yet, like Smith, there are also veterans worldwide that are finding success using veteran’s weed to alleviate symptoms related to PTSD. So what are lawmakers doing in order to bring policy changes that would facilitate the use of medical marijuana for veterans? Step by step lawmakers and stakeholders are changing the way weed is viewed, and recognizing cannabis as a powerful agent in healing PTSD for veterans that suffer on a daily basis. Below are a few more ways policymakers are pushing for cannabis as a natural treatment for veterans and PTSD.

Cannabis And PTSD

PTSD or post-traumatic stress disorder is known to cause crippling side effects such as flashbacks, nightmares, depression, and debilitating anxiety. Adam Smith, a former beret, found himself battling the severe effects of this PTSD after retirement. He states in an interview with High Green News, “I had a hard time sleeping, lots of anxiety, lots of hyper-vigilance, and all the symptoms that revolve around post-traumatic stress.”

In turn, these symptoms negatively affected his transition to civilian life, and he desperately needed something to help him combat the severe pain and lack of sleep. After years of suffering, Smith finally began using cannabis and found almost immediate relief for the majority of his post-traumatic stress symptoms. Consequently, Smith believes in the healing agents of medical cannabis and PTSD so much that he decided to start a Kentucky-based CBD tincture company that specifically targets veterans suffering from PTSD.

What The Studies Show

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs data, approximately 65% of Veterans are battling chronic pain. The likelihood of them dying from an accidental opioid overdose is twice that of other citizens. While a study found that the V.A. administration has experienced a 40% decrease in opioid prescriptions since 2012, veterans are looking for a safer and more beneficial alternative to opioids. Furthermore, clinical studies and anecdotal reports have presented cannabis as a powerful, natural alternative to opioids and over-the-counter sedatives and painkillers. In fact, one Canadian study showed that non-cannabis users are seven times more likely to experience a major depressive episode, and 4.7 times more likely to engage in suicidal thoughts.

In the United States progress is being made as two bills passed this March that could help reinforce the use of medical cannabis for veterans. In Canada, veteran’s weed is commonly recommended for veterans suffering from PTSD and the cost is even covered by the Veterans Affairs, making the country a pioneer for using medical marijuana to help veterans reclaim their psychological health.

So far in the US, thirty-six states have legalized the use of cannabis for medicinal purposes,

providing a publicly available medical cannabis program for patients. So while progress is being made, there are still some hurdles to cross in order to secure a path that would allow veterans to have access to cannabis without any hiccups. Subsequently, current US law prohibits the use of veterans' weed, including cannabidiol (CBD), and tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), or any cannabis-infused products among military members (veterans). As such, physicians and licensed doctors are often faced with ethical and legal limitations when it comes to recommending medical cannabis for veterans in uniform.

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