

Cannabis Alert

August 2026



Massachusetts and National 2026 Cannabis Wrap Up

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The first half of 2026 was an important year for the Massachusetts adult-use and medical cannabis industry, with significant developments on multiple fronts.

January 2026:

Launch of Social Consumption Regulations and Prospects for Municipal Implementation.

This year, Massachusetts became one of the first states in the U.S., and the first New England state, to implement a comprehensive regulatory framework for cannabis social consumption establishments, with the CCC's new regulations taking effect in January.

The rules establish three new license categories for social consumption:

- supplemental (for existing marijuana establishments to incorporate on-site consumption);
- hospitality (for qualifying applicants and marijuana establishments, including new or established non-cannabis businesses); and

- event organizer (for qualifying applicants and marijuana establishments to organize and host temporary consumption events).

These new social consumption licenses are exclusively available for 60 months to economic empowerment and social equity applicants, microbusinesses and craft marijuana cooperatives. In addition, a municipality must opt-in—by referendum, ordinance or bylaw—before any establishment may operate locally, and opting-in communities must then update zoning, adopt local permitting and approval processes, and negotiate a Host Community Agreement. As of early 2026, municipalities had only begun the opt-in process, and none have completed it. Clients can monitor municipal action through the [CCC's Municipal Zoning Tracker](#).

March 2026:

Three Year Extension of Social Equity Status Needed to Maintain Delivery Licenses.

In March, the CCC promulgated amended regulations extending for a three-year period, through April 1, 2029, the requirement that adult-use cannabis delivery licenses needed to be majority owned and controlled by candidates possessing social equity or economic empowerment participant status. This lengthy extension marks a significant reaffirmation of the CCC's commitment to continue to support social equity and economic empowerment programs in the Commonwealth.

April 2026:

Restructuring of Cannabis Control Commission and Changes to Licensing Caps and Personal Use Maximums.

In mid-April, following a legislative process extending through 2025 and a conference committee process to resolve differences between House and Senate bills, Governor Healy signed Chapter 65 - An Act Modernizing the Commonwealth's Cannabis Laws. The Act implemented substantial structural changes to the way the CCC would operate going forward and changed existing cannabis laws related to marijuana possession and the issuance of cannabis business licenses. Among other things, the CCC's

membership is reduced from five to three Commissioners, all of whom are to be appointed by the Governor. Commissioners will continue to have experience in public health, public safety, social justice, and/or in the regulation or distribution of marijuana.

The Act also:

- doubled the number of retail licenses an owner can possess from three to six;
- increased the legal possession limit for adults from one ounce to two ounces;
- statutorily authorized new social consumption license categories including on-site consumption, event-based use and research licenses; and
- strengthened accountability and reporting requirements for cannabis businesses that owe debt; and
- required studies on patterns of cannabis use, the current excise tax rates, and the future regulation of hemp-derived cannabinoid products.

April 2026:

Federal Reclassification of Medical Cannabis and Prospects for Similar Treatment for Adult-Use Cannabis

In April, the U.S. Department of Justice reclassified state-licensed medical marijuana and certain marijuana products from a Schedule I to a Schedule III controlled substance. This shifts medical cannabis out of the same category as heroin and into the same category as substances like Tylenol that have potential medical benefits and relatively limited potential harms. The medical reclassification does not apply to the much larger market for adult-use cannabis, but it does substantially increase the likelihood of a similar reclassification in the future. With that in mind, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency held an administrative hearing on June 29, 2026 to begin consideration of potential rescheduling of adult-use marijuana.

June 2026:

Promulgation of Emergency Regulations Codifying Recent Statutory Changes.

Emergency regulations enacted by the CCC to implement the April 2026 Act officially took effect on June 18, 2026. These sweeping rules amended existing CCC regulations to implement immediate changes to consumer purchase limits, business ownership caps, and medical regulations, among other cannabis legal changes.

CONTACT

If you have any questions regarding information contained in this alert or the cannabis laws in Massachusetts, please contact an attorney in our [Cannabis Law Practice](#).