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New Zealand's medical cannabis industry to benefit from amended regulations

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To better support innovation and reduce barriers to research in New Zealand



New Zealand’s Medicinal Cannabis Agency has received approval to make a number of changes to the Medicinal Cannabis Scheme. These changes involve amending regulations to better support economic and research opportunities for the medicinal cannabis industry.

The changes are mainly technical in nature and will not impact on the availability and quality of medicinal cannabis, which is available to patients via prescription from a New Zealand registered doctor.

The three main changes involve:

- broadening the medicinal cannabis category definitions to encompass a wider range of plant forms
- changing the quality requirements for exports of medicinal cannabis so New Zealand companies can access markets more readily
- enabling a licence to possess controlled drugs to be issued for non-therapeutic research with cannabis plant material or products sourced from the Medicinal Cannabis Scheme or the Industrial Hemp Framework.

“The changes are designed to streamline and update the Scheme’s compliance requirements wherever possible without compromising the overall quality of cannabis-based ingredients and medicinal cannabis products supplied to New Zealand patients. This will help ensure the medicinal cannabis industry is on a sustainable footing going forward", said Chris James, Deputy Director-General Regulatory Services at Health Ministry.

In New Zealand, medicinal cannabis can only be supplied via a prescription from a New Zealand registered doctor. The Scheme does not enable the recreational use of cannabis or allow patients to grow their own.