New Jersey Lawmakers Pass Medical Marijuana Bill

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The New Jersey Legislature passed a bill January 11 to legalize medical marijuana, *The New York Times* reports. It is the 14th state in the nation to do so. The measure allows people living with chronic illnesses such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, Lou Gehrig's disease, muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis to access marijuana grown and distributed by government-regulated dispensaries.

According to the article, Governor Jon S. Corzine will sign the marijuana bill into law before he leaves office next Tuesday, January 19. Within nine months, New Jersey residents with a marijuana prescription from their doctors will be able to access the drug at one of six locations in the state.

However, the bill represents the most restricting medical marijuana law in the nation. Doctors may prescribe marijuana to treat only a set of serious chronic illnesses. The bill also prohibits patients from growing their own marijuana and from using medical marijuana in public. Distribution will fall under the same strict conditions used to track opiates such as Oxycontin and morphine, and patients will be limited to two ounces of marijuana each month.

"I truly believe this will become a model for other states because it balances the compassionate use of medical marijuana while limiting the number of ailments a physician can prescribe it for," said Assemblyman Reed Gusciora (D–Princeton), who sponsored the legislation.

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