

# Puerto Rico authorizes medical marijuana

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Puerto Rico's Governor Alejandro Garcia Padilla has authorized the use of marijuana for medicinal use, in a surprise move after the US possession's legislature failed to act on the issue.

Garcia Padilla signed the decree late Sunday, instructing his [health secretary](#) to work out the details of its implementation.

The measure will clear the way for suppliers to begin making medicines derived from marijuana as early as August, Health Secretary Ana Rius Armendariz said.

The governor provided few details of the plan, but [smoking marijuana](#) will continue to be banned.

Rius Armendariz said regulations must now be drawn up governing how cannabis will be dispensed, who will have the right to produce it and what diagnoses will be required for treatment with marijuana-derived products.

The governor cited US studies that have found that cannabis can relieve pain caused by multiple sclerosis, AIDs, glaucoma, Alzheimer's, migraines and other diseases that sometimes resist traditional treatment.

The move follows a trend in the United States, where 24 of 50 states plus the District of Columbia allow the use of [medical marijuana](#).

It drew criticism from some members of Puerto Rico's legislature, where medicinal marijuana legislation had failed to win passage.

Garcia Padilla warned last week he intended to rule by decree to circumvent the legislature, after it defeated his proposal for a 16 percent value-added tax.

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