

# OVERVIEW OF THE CALIFORNIA'S MEDICAL CANNABIS LEGAL SYSTEMS

Medical cannabis legalization in California started in 1996 with the passage of [Proposition 215, the Compassionate Use Act](#), by the voters of California. This enacted Health and Safety Code Section 11362.5 and authorized the possession and cultivation of cannabis for "personal medical purposes" and also by "primary caregivers."

In 2003, the state legislature passed, and Governor Davis approved, [SB420](#). SB420 established the state ID card program, put in place more specific guidelines for qualified patients and caregivers, established a defense to state criminal charges for collective cultivation, and authorized the state attorney general to issue further guidelines.

In 2008, then Attorney General Jerry Brown issued [Guidelines for Security and Non-Diversion of Marijuana Grown for Medical Use](#). These provided additional guidance to collectives on how to operate within the protections of state law.

In 2015, the state legislature passed, in three separate bills, the Medical Marijuana Regulation and Safety Act. It has been amended several times, including to change the name to the Medical Cannabis Regulation and Safety

Act. The Act sets in place a comprehensive regulatory program for medical cannabis, including a state licensing program that starts in 2018. It also phases out the SB420 model of collective cultivation.

The three bills that made up the original Act are [AB 243](#), [AB 266](#), and [SB 643](#), all of which were approved by the Governor on October 9, 2015.

The subsequent amendments are as follows:

[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201520160AB21](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB21)

[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201520160SB837](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB837)

[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201520160SB1171](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB1171)

[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201520160AB821](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB821)

