



Ministerial Statement

By

The Hon. Michael A. Weeks, JP, MP
Minister of National Security

Medical Cannabis Framework

May 15th, 2026

Mr Speaker, I rise today to provide this Honourable House and the people of Bermuda with an update on the Government's ongoing work in relation to the development of a medical cannabis framework.

Mr. Speaker, this initiative reflects a careful, measured, and clinically responsible approach to improving patient access to cannabis-based medicines and medical cannabis products under strict medical supervision and regulatory oversight.

Mr. Speaker, for many years, Bermuda's legislative framework has classified cannabis as a controlled drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1972. While limited exemptions currently exist for certain cannabis-based medicines, access has remained narrow, administratively complex, and insufficiently structured to meet evolving patient and clinical needs.

Mr Speaker, this Government recognises that there are many people in our community living with serious medical conditions who are seeking additional treatment options under the guidance of their healthcare providers. We are also aware that medical cannabis is one treatment that has grown significantly in usage throughout the world as an alternative to traditional prescriptions.

We also recognise that any approach to medical cannabis must be carefully developed, clinically responsible, legally sound, and supported by appropriate safeguards.

Mr Speaker, that is precisely the work now underway.

Mr Speaker, as Honourable Members will be aware, Cabinet has approved the progression of policy and legislative work to support the establishment of a regulated medical cannabis framework in Bermuda.

Mr Speaker, the objective of this work is straightforward: to examine how Bermuda can create a safe and lawful pathway that improves access for patients with legitimate medical needs, while maintaining robust protections against misuse, diversion, and abuse. As part of that objective, we seek to treat approved cannabis-based medicines and regulated medical cannabis products in the same manner as other controlled prescription medications that may be lawfully prescribed by registered medical practitioners and dispensed through licensed pharmacies.

Mr. Speaker, medical cannabis is not a simple policy issue. It sits at the intersection of healthcare regulation, controlled drug legislation, public safety, professional clinical practice, and international legal obligations. As such, this work requires careful coordination across Government to ensure that whatever framework ultimately emerges is practical, enforceable, and in the public interest.

For that reason, this work is being progressed collaboratively, including engagement between the Ministry of National Security, the Ministry of Health, and the Attorney General's Chambers. I hasten to thank my colleagues and their teams at the Ministry of Health and the Attorney

General Chambers for their valuable contributions in developing this proposal.

Mr Speaker, the Ministry of Health brings essential clinical and public health expertise to this work, particularly in relation to patient safety, prescribing oversight, and healthcare regulation.

Mr Speaker, the Attorney General's Chambers is providing critical legal guidance to ensure that any proposed legislative approach is coherent, legally robust, and appropriately aligned with Bermuda's existing statutory framework and international obligations.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to be clear with the public on this matter so that there is no confusion about what we are trying to achieve. I, therefore, want to state that this work remains in development and that no final legislative model has been settled. That is intentional.

Mr. Speaker, this framework will be grounded in several important principles. Firstly, medical autonomy. Registered physicians in Bermuda should be able to determine, in their professional judgment, whether cannabis-based treatment is clinically appropriate for a patient.

Secondly, patient protection and access. Bermudians suffering from serious or chronic medical conditions should be able to access approved therapeutic treatments through a safe, lawful, and medically supervised process.

Thirdly, public safety and accountability. Any framework permitting medical cannabis must include robust safeguards, clear standards, and effective oversight mechanisms to prevent misuse and ensure proper clinical governance.

And fourthly, regulatory consistency. Cannabis-based medicines should be regulated within Bermuda's existing healthcare and controlled-drug framework rather than through the creation of a separate or parallel regime.

Mr Speaker, the Government's focus at this stage is on getting the framework right, rather than moving prematurely toward a predetermined outcome. What is settled, however, is the policy direction.

Mr Speaker, we are seeking an approach that supports legitimate patient access to medical cannabis through proper medical channels, respects clinical judgment, maintains appropriate oversight, and preserves the safeguards necessary to prevent misuse.

Mr Speaker, we are not trying to create unregulated access. Rather, we are developing a framework that ensures responsible access to medical cannabis. Under the proposed system, only registered medical practitioners will be permitted to prescribe approved cannabis products for medical use. Only licensed pharmacies and approved medical institutions will be authorised to import and dispense those products. Direct importation by individual patients will not be permitted.

Mr Speaker this proposal aligns Bermuda with international best practices and remains fully consistent with our obligations under the United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, which expressly permits the medical and scientific use of cannabis under strict regulatory control.

Mr Speaker, many jurisdictions with comparable legal and healthcare systems — including Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and several Caribbean countries — have already implemented similar medical

cannabis frameworks. Bermuda's approach is therefore neither experimental nor reckless. It is cautious, evidence-informed, and centred firmly on healthcare regulation and patient wellbeing.

Mr Speaker, our aim is to ensure that patients who may genuinely benefit from medically supervised cannabis-based treatment can do so within a clear, lawful, and accountable framework.

Mr. Speaker, as this work progresses, we will continue to give careful consideration to regulatory controls, prescribing standards, product quality assurance, importation arrangements, pharmacy oversight, enforcement implications, and broader public health protections.

Mr Speaker, the Government appreciates that there is significant public interest in this issue, particularly among patients and families who have been advocating for more treatment options.

Mr Speaker, I assure this Honourable House and the public that we hear those concerns, and we understand the urgency felt by many. I hasten to add that we also have a duty to ensure that any framework introduced is feasible, responsible, and sustainable.

Mr Speaker, I shall provide further updates to this Honourable House on our progress towards developing the medical cannabis framework.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.