

FLCAN Celebrates Historic Federal Action on Cannabis Rescheduling

MELBOURNE, FL — The Florida Cannabis Action Network (FLCAN) today welcomed a landmark announcement from the U.S. Department of Justice and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) initiating a major shift in federal cannabis policy. The DEA has issued a final order immediately placing FDA-approved marijuana-based drug products and marijuana regulated under state medical marijuana programs into Schedule III of the Controlled Substances Act. At the same time, the agency has launched an expedited administrative hearing process to consider moving adult-use cannabis from Schedule I to Schedule III.

“This is a historic moment,” said Jodi James, President of FLCAN. “Patients, doctors, and advocates have been waiting for decades for the federal government to formally recognize the medical value of cannabis in a meaningful regulatory framework.”

The final order delivers significant changes for state-run medical marijuana programs:

- **State-licensed medical marijuana operators are now recognized under Schedule III**, aligning federal policy with long-standing state programs.
- **Section 280E tax penalties will no longer apply** to state-licensed medical cannabis businesses, providing long-overdue financial relief.
- The DEA has created an **expedited federal registration pathway** for state-licensed operators, allowing them to submit existing credentials and receive federal approval within defined timelines.
- State-level regulatory systems—including labeling, packaging, and security—will be recognized within the federal framework.

“These changes validate the systems that states like Florida have built over the past decade,” James added. “It provides stability not just for businesses, but for the patients who depend on safe, regulated access.”

The order also makes clear that several categories remain under stricter federal control:

- Unlicensed bulk marijuana and extracts remain Schedule I
- Synthetic THC products are not included in the rescheduling
- Hemp and hemp-derived products are unaffected because they are already federally legal

The DEA’s announcement also initiates a formal process to consider rescheduling adult-use cannabis. The expedited hearing timeline signals increased urgency at the federal level.

“This next phase is critical,” said James. “Patients have led the way, and now the broader conversation about cannabis policy is moving forward. It’s essential that this process remains grounded in science, patient experience, and real-world outcomes, not outdated assumptions.”

For Florida, this federal action arrives at a pivotal moment. The state continues to debate patient access, cost barriers, and regulatory frameworks through both legislative efforts and ongoing legal challenges.

“Federal recognition is important, but Florida cannot afford to wait,” James said. “We need to continue advancing policies at the state level that ensure safe, effective, and affordable access for patients right now.”

FLCAN, which has advocated for cannabis reform for more than 28 years, called the announcement a turning point but not the end of the effort.

“This is a major step forward, and we are celebrating it,” James said. “But meaningful reform requires continued work at every level of government. Patients, veterans, and consumers still need workplace protections, access, and affordability. We are committed to ensuring that progress continues.”