

The Senate Committee on Health and Human Services offers the following substitute to HB 1:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 12 of Title 16 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to  
2 public health and morals, so as to provide for the possession of low THC oil under certain  
3 circumstances; to provide for definitions; to provide for penalties; to amend Title 31 of the  
4 Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to health, so as to create a registration within  
5 the Department of Public Health for individuals or caregivers who are authorized to possess  
6 low THC oil; to define certain terms; to provide for registration cards; to provide for  
7 procedure; to create the Georgia Commission on Medical Cannabis; to provide for  
8 membership, procedures, duties, and responsibilities; to provide for an automatic repeal of  
9 the commission; to allow the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia to create  
10 or work with others to create a research program using low THC oil in treating certain  
11 residents of this state who have medication-resistant epilepsies; to provide for permits to be  
12 issued to program participants and others; to provide for automatic repeal of the research  
13 program; to amend Chapter 1 of Title 51 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating  
14 to general provisions of torts, so as to provide for limited liability for health care institutions  
15 and health care providers that permit the possession, administration, or use of low THC oil  
16 by an individual or caregiver on their premises in accordance with the laws of this state; to  
17 provide for a short title; to provide for related matters; to provide for an effective date; to  
18 repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

19 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

20 **PART I**  
21 **SECTION 1-1.**

22 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Haleigh's Hope Act."

23 **SECTION 1-2.**

24 Chapter 12 of Title 16 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to offenses against  
25 public health and morals, is amended by adding a new article to read as follows:

26 "ARTICLE 8

27 16-12-190.

28 As used in this article, the term 'low THC oil' means an oil that contains not more than 5  
29 percent by weight of tetrahydrocannabinol and an amount of cannabidiol equal to or greater  
30 than the amount of tetrahydrocannabinol.

31 16-12-191.

32 (a)(1) Notwithstanding any provision of Chapter 13 of this title, it shall be lawful for any  
33 person to possess or have under his or her control 20 fluid ounces or less of low THC oil  
34 if:

35 (A) Such person is registered with the Department of Public Health as set forth in  
36 Code Section 31-2A-18;

37 (B) Such person has in his or her possession a registration card issued by the  
38 Department of Public Health; and

39 (C) Such substance is in a pharmaceutical container labeled by the manufacturer  
40 indicating the percentage of tetrahydrocannabinol therein.

41 (2) Notwithstanding any provision of Chapter 13 of this title, any person who possesses  
42 or has under his or her control 20 fluid ounces or less of low THC oil without complying  
43 with subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) of paragraph (1) of this subsection shall be punished  
44 as for a misdemeanor.

45 (b)(1) Notwithstanding any provision of Chapter 13 of this title, it shall be lawful for any  
46 person to possess or have under his or her control 20 fluid ounces or less of low THC oil  
47 if:

48 (A) Such person is involved in a clinical research program being conducted by the  
49 Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia or any authorized clinical trial  
50 or research study in this state or their authorized agent pursuant to Chapter 51 of Title  
51 31 as:

52 (i) A program participant;

53 (ii) A parent, guardian, or legal custodian of a program participant;

54 (iii) An employee of the board of regents designated to participate in the research  
55 program;

56 (iv) A program agent;

- 57 (v) A program collaborator and their designated employees;  
58 (vi) A program supplier and their designated employees;  
59 (vii) A program physician;  
60 (viii) A program clinical researcher;  
61 (ix) Program pharmacy personnel; or  
62 (x) Other program medical personnel;  
63 (B) Such person has in his or her possession a permit issued as provided in Code  
64 Section 31-51-7; and  
65 (C) Such substance is in a pharmaceutical container labeled by the manufacturer  
66 indicating the percentage of tetrahydrocannabinol therein.  
67 (2) Notwithstanding any provision of Chapter 13 of this title, any person who possesses  
68 or has under his or her control 20 fluid ounces or less of low THC oil without complying  
69 with subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) of paragraph (1) of this subsection shall be punished  
70 as for a misdemeanor.  
71 (c) Notwithstanding any provision of Chapter 13 of this title, any person having possession  
72 of or under his or her control more than 20 fluid ounces of low THC oil but less than 160  
73 fluid ounces of low THC oil or who manufactures, distributes, dispenses, sells, or possesses  
74 with the intent to distribute low THC oil shall be guilty of a felony, and upon conviction  
75 thereof, shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than one nor more than ten years,  
76 a fine not to exceed \$50,000.00, or both.  
77 (d) Notwithstanding any provision of Chapter 13 of this title, any person who sells,  
78 manufactures, delivers, brings into this state, or has possession of 160 or more fluid ounces  
79 of low THC oil shall be guilty of the felony offense of trafficking in low THC oil and, upon  
80 conviction thereof, shall be punished as follows:  
81 (1) If the quantity of low THC oil is at least 160 fluid ounces but less than 31,000 fluid  
82 ounces, by imprisonment for not less than five years nor more than ten years and a fine  
83 not to exceed \$100,000.00;  
84 (2) If the quantity of low THC oil is at least 31,000 fluid ounces but less than 154,000  
85 fluid ounces, by imprisonment for not less than seven years nor more than 15 years and  
86 a fine not to exceed \$250,000.00; and  
87 (3) If the quantity of low THC oil is 154,000 or more fluid ounces, by imprisonment for  
88 not less than ten years nor more than 20 years and a fine not to exceed \$1 million.  
89 (e) Subsections (c) and (d) of this Code section shall not apply to a person involved in a  
90 research program being conducted by the Board of Regents of the University System of  
91 Georgia or its authorized agent pursuant to Chapter 51 of Title 31 as an employee of the  
92 board of regents designated to participate in such program, a program agent, a program  
93 collaborator and their designated employees, a program supplier and their designated

94 employees, a physician, clinical researcher, pharmacy personnel, or other medical  
 95 personnel, provided that such person has in his or her possession a permit issued as  
 96 provided in Code Section 31-5-7 and such possession, sale, manufacturing, distribution,  
 97 or dispensing is solely for the purposes set forth in Chapter 51 of Title 31."

98 **PART II**

99 **SECTION 2-1.**

100 Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to health, is amended in Chapter  
 101 2A, relating to the Department of Public Health, by adding a new Code section to read as  
 102 follows:

103 "31-2A-18.

104 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

105 (1) 'Board' means the Georgia Composite Medical Board.

106 (2) 'Caregiver' means the parent, guardian, or legal custodian of an individual who is less  
 107 than 18 years of age or the legal guardian of an adult.

108 (3) 'Condition' means:

109 (A) Cancer, when such diagnosis is end stage or the treatment produces related wasting  
 110 illness, recalcitrant nausea and vomiting;

111 (B) Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, when such diagnosis is severe or end stage;

112 (C) Seizure disorders related to diagnosis of epilepsy or trauma related head injuries;

113 (D) Multiple sclerosis, when such diagnosis is severe or end stage;

114 (E) Crohn's disease;

115 (F) Mitochondrial disease;

116 (G) Parkinson's disease, when such diagnosis is severe or end stage; or

117 (H) Sickle cell disease, when such diagnosis is severe or end stage.

118 (4) 'Department' means the Department of Public Health.

119 (5) 'Low THC oil' shall have the same meaning as set forth in Code Section 16-12-190.

120 (6) 'Physician' means an individual licensed to practice medicine pursuant to Article 2  
 121 of Chapter 34 of Title 43.

122 (7) 'Registry' means the Low THC Oil Patient Registry.

123 (b) There is established within the department the Low THC Oil Patient Registry.

124 (c) The purpose of the registry is to provide a registration of individuals and caregivers  
 125 who have been issued registration cards. The department shall establish procedures and  
 126 promulgate rules and regulations for the establishment and operation of the registration  
 127 process and dispensing of registry cards to individuals and caregivers. Only individuals  
 128 residing in this state for at least one year or a child born in this state less than one year old

129 shall be eligible for registration under this Code section. Nothing in this Code section shall  
 130 apply to any Georgia residents living temporarily in another state for the purpose of  
 131 securing THC oil for treatment of any condition under this Code section.

132 (d) The department shall issue a registration card to individuals and caregivers as soon as  
 133 practicable but no later than September 1, 2015, when an individual has been certified to  
 134 the department by his or her physician as being diagnosed with a condition and has been  
 135 authorized by such physician to use low THC oil as treatment for such condition. The  
 136 board shall establish procedures and promulgate rules and regulations to assist physicians  
 137 in providing required uniform information relating to certification and any other matter  
 138 relating to the issuance of certifications. In promulgating such rules and regulations, the  
 139 board shall require that physicians have a doctor-patient relationship when certifying an  
 140 individual as needing low THC oil and physicians shall be required to be treating an  
 141 individual for the specific condition requiring such treatment.

142 (e) The board shall require physicians to issue quarterly reports to the board. Such reports  
 143 shall require physicians to provide information, including, but not limited to, dosages  
 144 recommended for a particular condition, clinical responses, compliance, responses to  
 145 treatment, side effects, and drug interactions.

146 (f) Information received and records kept by the department for purposes of administering  
 147 this Code section shall be confidential; provided, however, that such information shall be  
 148 disclosed:

149 (1) Upon written request of an individual or caregiver registered pursuant to this Code  
 150 section; and

151 (2) To peace officers and prosecuting attorneys for the purpose of:

152 (A) Verifying that an individual in possession of a registration card is registered  
 153 pursuant to this Code section; or

154 (B) Determining that an individual in possession of low THC oil is registered pursuant  
 155 to this Code section.

156 (g) The board shall develop a waiver form that will advise that the use of cannabinoids and  
 157 THC containing products have not been approved by the FDA and the clinical benefits are  
 158 unknown and may cause harm. Any patient or caregiver shall sign such waiver prior to his  
 159 or her approval for registration."

160 **PART III**

161 **SECTION 3-1.**

162 Said title is further amended by adding a new chapter to read as follows:

163

"CHAPTER 50164 31-50-1.165 (a) There is created the Georgia Commission on Medical Cannabis.166 (b) As used in this chapter, the term 'commission' means the Georgia Commission on  
167 Medical Cannabis.168 31-50-2.169 (a) The commission shall consist of 17 members. The commissioner of public health, the  
170 director of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, the director of the Georgia Drugs and  
171 Narcotics Agency, the commissioner of agriculture, the chairperson of the Georgia  
172 Composite Medical Board, and the Governor's executive counsel shall be permanent  
173 members of the commission. The permanent members of the commission may designate  
174 another individual to serve in his or her stead. The remaining members of the commission  
175 shall be appointed by the Governor on or before July 1, 2015. The remaining members  
176 shall be:177 (1) Two members of the Senate;178 (2) Two members of the House of Representatives;179 (3) A board certified hematologist-oncologist;180 (4) A board certified neurologist;181 (5) A board certified gastroenterologist;182 (6) A board certified pharmacist;183 (7) An attorney employed by the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council of the State of Georgia  
184 or a prosecuting attorney;185 (8) A sheriff; and186 (9) A police chief.187 (b) In the event of death, resignation, disqualification, or removal for any reason of any  
188 member of the commission, the vacancy shall be filled in the same manner as the original  
189 appointment, and the successor shall serve for the unexpired term.190 (c) Membership on the commission shall not constitute public office, and no member shall  
191 be disqualified from holding public office by reason of his or her membership.192 (d) The Governor shall designate a chairperson of the commission from among the  
193 members, which chairperson shall serve in that position at the pleasure of the Governor.  
194 The chairperson shall only vote to break a tie. The commission may elect such other  
195 officers and committees as it considers appropriate.196 (e) The commission, with the approval of the Governor, may employ such professional,  
197 technical, or clerical personnel as deemed necessary to carry out the purposes of this

198 chapter. The commission may create committees from among its membership as well as  
199 appoint other persons to serve in an advisory capacity to the commission in implementing  
200 this chapter.

201 (f) The commission shall be attached for administrative purposes only to the Department  
202 of Public Health in accordance with Code Section 50-4-3. The Department of Public  
203 Health may use any funds specifically appropriated to it to support the work of the  
204 commission.

205 31-50-3.

206 (a) The commission may conduct meetings at such places and times as it deems necessary  
207 or convenient to enable it to exercise fully and effectively its powers, perform its duties,  
208 and accomplish the objectives and purposes of this chapter. The commission shall hold  
209 meetings at the call of the chairperson.

210 (b) A quorum for transacting business shall be a majority of the members of the  
211 commission.

212 (c) Any legislative members of the commission shall receive the allowances provided for  
213 in Code Section 28-1-8. Citizen members shall receive a daily expense allowance in the  
214 amount specified in subsection (b) of Code Section 45-7-21 as well as the mileage or  
215 transportation allowance authorized for state employees. Members of the commission who  
216 are state officials, other than legislative members, or state employees shall receive no  
217 compensation for their services on the commission, but shall be reimbursed for expenses  
218 incurred in the performance of their duties as members of the commission in the same  
219 manner as reimbursements are made in their capacity as state officials or state employees.  
220 The funds necessary for the reimbursement of the expenses of state officials, other than  
221 legislative members, and state employees shall come from funds appropriated to or  
222 otherwise available to their respective departments.

223 31-50-4.

224 (a) The commission shall have the following duties:

225 (1) To establish comprehensive recommendations regarding the potential regulation of  
226 medical cannabis in this state. Such recommendations shall include, without limitations,  
227 specification of the department or departments to have responsibility for the oversight of  
228 a state-sanctioned system related to medical cannabis. A detailed report, which shall be  
229 submitted no later than December 31, 2015, including a review of the conditions, needs,  
230 issues, and problems related to medical cannabis and any recommended action or  
231 proposed legislation which the commission deems necessary or appropriate shall be  
232 provided to the executive counsel of the Governor, the Office of Planning and Budget,

233 and the chairpersons of the House Committee on Appropriations, the Senate  
 234 Appropriations Committee, the House Committee on Judiciary, Non-civil, the Senate  
 235 Judiciary, Non-civil Committee, the House Committee on Health and Human Services,  
 236 and the Senate Health and Human Services Committee; and

237 (2) To evaluate and consider the best practices, experiences, and results of legislation in  
 238 other states with regard to medical cannabis.

239 (b) The commission shall have the following powers:

240 (1) To evaluate how the laws and programs affecting medical cannabis should operate  
 241 in this state;

242 (2) To request and receive data from and review the records of appropriate state agencies  
 243 to the greatest extent allowed by state and federal law;

244 (3) To authorize entering into contracts or agreements through the commission's  
 245 chairperson necessary or incidental to the performance of its duties;

246 (4) To establish rules and procedures for conducting the business of the commission; and

247 (5) To conduct studies, hold public meetings, collect data, or take any other action the  
 248 commission deems necessary to fulfill its responsibilities.

249 (c) Subject to the availability of funds, the commission shall be authorized to retain the  
 250 services of attorneys, consultants, subject matter experts, economists, budget analysts, data  
 251 analysts, statisticians, and other individuals or organizations as determined appropriate by  
 252 the commission.

253 31-50-5.

254 This chapter shall stand repealed on June 30, 2016."

255 **PART IV**

256 **SECTION 4-1.**

257 Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to health, is amended by adding  
 258 a new chapter to read as follows:

259 **"CHAPTER 51**

260 31-51-1.

261 (a) As used in this chapter, the term 'low THC oil' shall have the same meaning as set forth  
 262 in Code Section 16-12-190.

263 (b) The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia may cause to be designed,  
 264 developed, implemented, and administered a low THC oil research program to develop  
 265 rigorous data that will inform and expand the scientific community's understanding of

266 potential treatments for individuals under 18 years of age with medication-resistant  
267 epilepsies.

268 (c) Any such program shall adhere to the regulatory process established by the federal  
269 Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, as well as other federal laws and regulations governing the  
270 development of new medications containing controlled substances.

271 (d) Any universities and nonprofit institutions of higher education that conduct research  
272 may continue any research that is permitted under federal law as well as any additional  
273 research is permitted under this chapter.

274 31-51-2.

275 To the extent permissible under this chapter, any research program developed pursuant to  
276 this chapter shall be designed to permit the voluntary enrollment of all individuals under  
277 18 years of age having medication-resistant epilepsies who are residents of this state and  
278 who:

279 (1) Have been residents of this state for the 24 month period immediately preceding their  
280 entry into the program; or

281 (2) Have been residents of this state continuously since birth if they are less than 24  
282 months old at the time of their entry into the program.

283 31-51-3.

284 (a) For purposes of this chapter, the board of regents may act through a unit of the  
285 University System of Georgia, a nonprofit corporation research institute, or a nonprofit  
286 institution of higher education that conducts research, or any combination thereof.

287 (b) Any nonprofit corporation research institute approved by the board of regents to  
288 participate in the research program established under this chapter shall be required to have  
289 the necessary experience, expertise, industry standards and security procedures, and  
290 infrastructure to implement such research in accordance with accepted scientific and  
291 regulatory standards.

292 (c) The board of regents and its authorized agent may enter into such agreements, among  
293 themselves and with other parties, as are reasonable and necessary to implement the  
294 provisions of this chapter.

295 31-51-4.

296 (a) The board of regents or its authorized agent may designate an FDA approved supplier  
297 of low THC oil and collaborate with a designated supplier to develop a clinical trial or  
298 research study protocol to study the use of low THC oil in the treatment of individuals  
299 under 18 years of age with medication-resistant epilepsies, which trial or research study

300 shall be conducted at one or more locations in this state. Such supplier shall be required  
301 to supply a source of low THC oil that has been standardized and tested in keeping with  
302 such standards.

303 (b) The board of regents or its authorized agent shall work with any supplier of low THC  
304 oil to commit personnel and other resources to such collaboration and to supply low THC  
305 oil for a collaborative study under reasonable terms and conditions to be agreed upon  
306 mutually.

307 31-51-5.

308 Any public record, as defined by Code Section 50-18-70, produced pursuant to this chapter  
309 shall be exempt from disclosure to the extent provided by Code Section 50-18-72.

310 31-51-6.

311 All activities undertaken pursuant to this chapter shall be subject to availability of funds  
312 appropriated to the board of regents or to any other academic or research institution or  
313 otherwise made available for purposes of this chapter.

314 31-51-7.

315 (a)(1) Research program participants and their parents, guardian, or legal custodian,  
316 employees of the board of regents designated to participate in the research program,  
317 program agents and collaborators and their designated employees, and program suppliers  
318 of low THC oil and their designated employees shall be immune from state prosecution  
319 as provided in Code Section 16-12-191.

320 (2) Physicians, clinical researchers, pharmacy personnel, and all medical personnel in  
321 the research program authorized by this chapter shall be immune from state prosecution  
322 as provided in Code Section 16-12-191.

323 (b) For purposes of providing proof of research program participation, the board of regents  
324 or its agent which administers the research program authorized by this chapter shall provide  
325 appropriate permits, suitable for carrying on their persons or display, as applicable, to  
326 research program participants and their parents, guardian, or legal custodian, employees  
327 of the board of regents designated to participate in the research program, program agents  
328 and collaborators and their designated employees, program suppliers of low THC oil and  
329 their designated employees, physicians, clinical researchers, pharmacy personnel, and all  
330 medical personnel in the program.

331 31-51-8.

332 The board of regents may establish fees for program participants in such amounts as are  
333 reasonable to offset program costs.

334 31-51-9.

335 The board of regents may adopt such rules and regulations as are reasonable and necessary  
336 for purposes of this chapter.

337 31-51-10.

338 This chapter shall stand repealed on July 1, 2020."

339 **PART V**  
340 **SECTION 5-1.**

341 Chapter 1 of Title 51 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to general  
342 provisions of torts, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

343 "51-1-29.6.

344 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

345 (1) 'Caregiver' shall have the same meaning as set forth in Code Section 31-2A-18.

346 (2) 'Health care institution' shall have the same meaning as set forth in Code Section  
347 51-1-29.5.

348 (3) 'Health care provider' means any person licensed, certified, or registered under  
349 Chapter 9, 10A, 11, 11A, 26, 28, 30, 33, 34, 35, 39, or 44 of Title 43 or Chapter 4 of  
350 Title 26.

351 (4) 'Low THC oil' shall have the same meaning as set forth in Code Section 16-12-190.

352 (b) A health care institution shall not be subject to any civil liability, penalty, licensing  
353 sanction, or other detrimental action and a health care provider shall not be subject to any  
354 civil liability, penalty, denial of a right or privilege, disciplinary action by a professional  
355 licensing board, or other detrimental action for allowing an individual or caregiver to  
356 possess, administer, or use low THC oil on the premises of a health care institution or  
357 offices of a health care provider provided that the possession of such substance is in  
358 accordance with the laws of this state."

359

**PART VI**

360

**SECTION 6-1.**

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This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law

362

without such approval.

363

**SECTION 6-2.**

364

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.