

HEMP AS HEALTHCARE: FEDERAL LAW THREATENS PATIENTS AND ENTREPRENEURS

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Since the passage of the 2018 Farm Bill, which legalized hemp-derived products, the use of cannabidiol (CBD) has spread across the country. A *Forbes* survey of US adults finds that 60 percent of respondents—including 89 percent of respondents aged 77 or older—have tried a CBD product.¹ Many of these respondents report using it to treat a medical condition such as pain, anxiety, and difficulty sleeping (see Table 1). Studies have shown that such CBD products have potential health benefits.² Now, upcoming changes in federal law threaten this type of treatment and the entrepreneurs who provide it.

Kentucky entrepreneurs Jim Higdon and Eric Zipperle saw the Farm Bill as an opportunity to build a business while helping people find relief from chronic health conditions. Their business, Cornbread Hemp, produces hemp-derived CBD products for consumers across the country and across age cohorts. In fact, 60 percent of Cornbread Hemp’s customers nationwide are age 66 or older and use CBD to seek relief from a variety of ailments.³

CBD consumers live in every region of the country. A *Gallup* poll found that 21 percent of people in the West are CBD consumers, whereas 13 percent of people in the South and 11 percent in the East and Midwest are CBD consumers.⁴

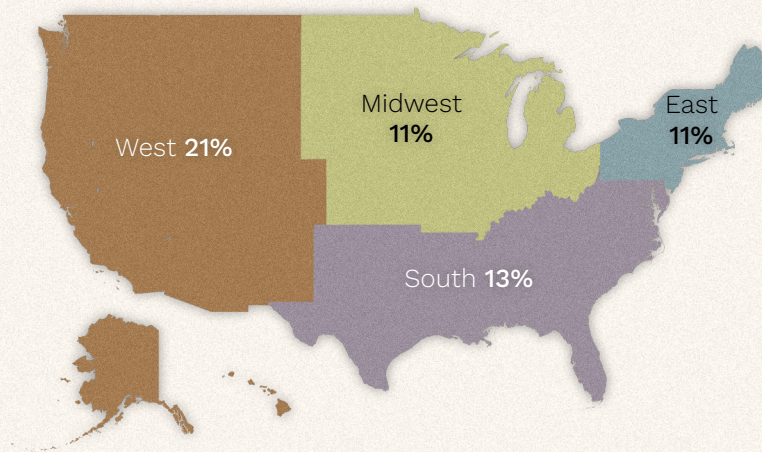
In every state across the country, hemp-derived CBD products are used for healthcare (see Figure 1). CBD is increasingly being used to treat physical, neurological, and psychological ailments in Americans of all ages.

TABLE 1. REASONS REPORTED BY RESPONDENTS FOR CBD USE, BY AGE

REASON	18–25 ↓	26–41	42–57	58–76	77+
Alleviate anxiety	55%	56%	50%	22%	53%
Reduce stress or relax	50%	65%	58%	52%	77%
Relieve pain	45%	62%	62%	60%	51%
Improve sleep quality	40%	60%	53%	42%	78%
Treat medical condition (at suggestion of doctor)	35%	54%	39%	18%	73%
Satisfy curiosity	5%	25%	25%	23%	44%
Engage in recreation	5%	37%	33%	19%	57%

Source: Alana Hall, “CBD Statistics, Data, and Use,” *Forbes*, April 29, 2024.

FIGURE 1. PROPORTION OF CBD CONSUMERS BY REGION



Source: Megan Brenan, “14% of Americans Say They Use CBD Products,” *Gallup*, August 7, 2019.

Although the full potential of CBD’s health applications is still unclear, a growing body of scholarly research notes its likely positive effects for pain relief,⁵ sleep disorders,⁶ and psychiatric disorders such as anxiety and autism.⁷ Most consumer survey participants report that CBD is effective and, in some cases, allowed them to stop taking over-the-counter or prescription drugs.⁸

The federal bill passed in November 2025 (H.R. 5371) to end the government shutdown, however, has threatened the availability of CBD products. The new law, set to take effect in November 2026, could eliminate 95 percent of all hemp-derived cannabinoid products made in the United States.⁹ The changes to the legal definition of hemp could override existing state laws governing CBD production and decimate the multi-billion-dollar hemp industry, limiting Americans’ options for medical relief.

Legislative proposals such as the Hemp Planning and Predictability Act (H.R. 7024/S. 3686) would extend the implementation of the new law and give businesses such as Cornbread Hemp, which depend on long-term planting and harvesting timelines, flexibility to prepare. An extension would also give lawmakers time to weigh alternative regulatory frameworks that consider the potential health benefits of CBD products and their widespread use by American consumers.

NOTES

1. Alana Hall, “CBD Statistics, Data, and Use,” *Forbes*, April 29, 2024.
2. Jamie Corroon and Joy A. Phillips, “A Cross-Sectional Study of Cannabidiol Users,” *Cannabis and Cannabinoid Research* 3, no. 1 (2018): 152–61.
3. Jim Higdon and Eric Zipperle, interview by Brittany Hunter, email, September 18, 2025, available from authors upon request.
4. Megan Brenan, “14% of Americans Say They Use CBD Products,” *Gallup*, August 7, 2019.
5. Guillermo Cásedas et al., “Cannabidiol (CBD): A Systematic Review of Clinical and Preclinical Evidence in the Treatment of Pain,” *Pharmaceuticals* 17, no. 11 (2024): 1438.
6. Rylea M. Ranum et al., “Use of Cannabidiol in the Management of Insomnia: A Systematic Review,” *Cannabis and Cannabinoid Research* 8, no. 2 (2023): 213–29.
7. Inga Dammann et al., “Cannabidiol and Its Potential Evidence-Based Psychiatric Benefits - A Critical Review,” *Pharmacopsychiatry* 57, no. 3 (2024): 115–32.
8. Lisa L. Gill, “CBD Goes Mainstream,” *Consumer Reports*, April 11, 2019.
9. Ariana Schumacher, “95% of Hemp Products Banned as Part of Legislation That Reopened the Government,” *Agweek*, November 14, 2025.



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