

NEW LAWS RELATED TO SUBSTANCES & GAMBLING

A clear, public-facing guide to key changes enacted in 2026

WHAT THIS REPORT DOES

Explains the major changes in plain language, groups them by topic, and shows when each provision takes effect.

AT A GLANCE

18 key changes

Effective in 2026, 2027, or upon passage

KEY THEMES

HEALTH & TREATMENT Overdose response, emergency opioid treatment, pain management and research access.	PUBLIC SAFETY Alcohol, nicotine, unsafe businesses, impaired-driving evidence and local authority.	MARKET RULES Cannabis sales, taxes, product standards, enforcement and medical access.	FAIR GAMING Sports-wager integrity, underage protections and campus advertising limits.
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Prepared as a general information resource

Based on: 2026 Enacted Legislation Related to Substances and Gambling

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A topic-by-topic guide for readers who want the key points quickly.

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Each law summary includes three things: what changed, why it matters to the public, and when the provision takes effect. Public Act citations are provided for readers who want the full legal text.

IMPORTANT NOTE This report is an educational summary, not legal advice. The enacted Public Acts and any implementing guidance control.

01

AT A GLANCE

The 2026 laws combine health access, public safety, market regulation and consumer protection.

BIG PICTURE

The changes do not move in only one direction. Some expand access to treatment and medical programs; others strengthen enforcement, revise market rules, or clarify legal procedures.

FIVE PUBLIC-FACING TAKEAWAYS

1 | MORE OVERDOSE RESPONSE OPTIONS

Schools receive broader authority to use over-the-counter opioid antagonists, and hospitals gain a bridge-treatment pathway for opioid use disorder.

2 | MORE LOCAL SAFETY AUTHORITY

Municipalities and courts receive additional tools related to unsafe businesses and youth-oriented juice bars.

3 | CANNABIS RULES CHANGE

The state revises retail operations, medical access, THC limits, tax structure and enforcement coordination.

4 | GAMING PROTECTIONS EXPAND

New provisions address manipulation of sports wagers, underage online participation and advertising on college-controlled platforms.

5 | EFFECTIVE DATES VARY

Some provisions took effect upon passage; many begin July 1 or October 1, 2026; selected requirements begin January 1, 2027.

EFFECTIVE-DATE TIMELINE

UPON PASSAGE	JULY 1, 2026	OCT. 1, 2026	JAN. 1, 2027
School opioid antagonists; cannabis pharmacist requirement; portions of gaming law	Alcohol liability; Medicaid pain options; psychedelic pilot; gaming advertising	Most local safety, cannabis, impaired-driving and sports-wager provisions	Hospital OUD bridge pathway begins; new e-cigarette registration cap

02

OPIOID RESPONSE & PAIN MANAGEMENT

New provisions expand overdose response and support transitions from emergency care to ongoing treatment.

PUBLIC HEALTH FOCUS

The health-related laws focus on immediate overdose response, short-term continuity of opioid use disorder treatment, and consideration of non-opioid pain options.

OVERDOSE RESPONSE

Opioid Antagonists in Public Schools

Any person may administer an FDA-approved, over-the-counter opioid antagonist nasal spray to treat or prevent an overdose, including in a public school. The law provides civil and criminal immunity and removes a drug-permit requirement for distribution.
PUBLIC IMPACT: Makes emergency overdose medication easier to provide and distribute in school settings.

EFFECTIVE

Upon passage

PA 26-38, §§ 1-2; PA 26-68, § 165

TREATMENT ACCESS

Emergency Department Bridge Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder

Hospitals may administer buprenorphine or methadone in the emergency department without admitting the patient. At discharge, patients may receive an opioid antagonist prescription, an outpatient referral, and either a buprenorphine bridge dose or a methadone last-dose letter.
PUBLIC IMPACT: Helps reduce treatment gaps between an emergency visit and ongoing outpatient care while preserving clinical judgment.

EFFECTIVE

Program begins Jan. 1, 2027

PA 26-13, § 12 (act effective Oct. 1, 2026)

PAIN CARE

Pain Management for Medicaid Beneficiaries

When prescribing an opioid for pain, authorized practitioners must consider whether non-opioid options are feasible. Examples include physical therapy, chiropractic care, massage, acupuncture and spinal cord stimulation.
PUBLIC IMPACT: Encourages consideration of a wider range of pain-management approaches before or alongside opioid medication.

EFFECTIVE

July 1, 2026

PA 26-146, § 4

03 ALCOHOL, YOUTH VENUES & IMPAIRED-DRIVING EVIDENCE

Changes affect alcohol permittees, youth-oriented events and courtroom procedures for chemical-test evidence.

ALCOHOL Liability for Serving Alcohol to a Minor

An age-statement form may still help protect a permittee from liability, but the permittee or backer must also have acted reasonably when serving or giving alcohol to the minor.

PUBLIC IMPACT: A signed form alone is not enough; reasonable conduct remains part of the legal protection.

EFFECTIVE

July 1, 2026

PA 26-100, § 25

YOUTH SAFETY Local Rules for “Juice Bars”

Towns may prohibit juice bars, set operating hours, or bar alcohol sales on cafe-permit premises while a juice bar is operating. Attendance is limited to 10% of the building occupancy, and law enforcement may reject or stop an event under specified conditions.

PUBLIC IMPACT: Gives municipalities more control over youth-oriented events held at alcohol-licensed locations.

EFFECTIVE

Oct. 1, 2026

PA 26-100, § 62

LEGAL PROCEDURE Timing Rule for Blood and Urine Test Results

The prior delivery deadline for test-result reports no longer applies to blood or urine results used in DUI, impaired-boating or impaired-hunting prosecutions. The timing condition continues to apply to breath-test results.

PUBLIC IMPACT: Changes one evidentiary requirement for certain chemical tests; it does not eliminate other admissibility requirements.

EFFECTIVE

Oct. 1, 2026

PA 26-45, §§ 2-3

04

NICOTINE & LOCAL PUBLIC SAFETY

New tools address e-cigarette dealer density, unlawful products and businesses that threaten public health or safety.

ENFORCEMENT
FOCUS

These provisions strengthen the roles of the Department of Consumer Protection, municipalities, courts and law enforcement in regulating businesses and products.

NICOTINE

E-Cigarette Dealer Registration

For new applications submitted on or after January 1, 2027, registrations are limited to one dealer for every 2,500 town residents. DCP may impose a civil penalty of up to \$5,000 for each unlawfully sold electronic nicotine delivery system or vapor product; illegal products may be treated as a nuisance and seized.
PUBLIC IMPACT: Limits the number of new dealers and increases potential financial and enforcement consequences for unlawful sales.

EFFECTIVE

Jan. 1, 2027

PA 26-100, § 33

LOCAL AUTHORITY

Businesses That Pose an Immediate Threat

A court may direct law enforcement to summarily close and seal a business that poses an immediate threat to public health and safety. The law also expands the violations that may support a municipal operating prohibition.
PUBLIC IMPACT: Gives towns and courts a faster way to stop certain dangerous business operations, including matters involving cannabis or tobacco products.

EFFECTIVE

Oct. 1, 2026

PA 26-8, § 53

HOW THE LOCAL-SAFETY PATHWAY CAN WORK

1 IDENTIFY A municipality identifies a qualifying threat or violation.	2 SEEK ACTION The municipality may prohibit operations and ask the Superior Court for an order.	3 CLOSE / SECURE The court may authorize seizure, closure and sealing of the premises.
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05

CANNABIS: ACCESS & RETAIL OPERATIONS

Several laws revise who may dispense products, who may access the medical market and how potency rules apply.

RETAIL OPERATIONS Dispensaries and Hybrid Retailers Cannabis and medical cannabis no longer have to be dispensed to a qualifying patient or caregiver by a licensed pharmacist. The related remote pharmacist order-verification requirement is also removed. PUBLIC IMPACT: Changes staffing and dispensing requirements at cannabis retail locations.	EFFECTIVE Upon passage PA 26-8, §§ 31 & 67
MEDICAL ACCESS Out-of-State Medical Cannabis Patients and Caregivers Qualifying patients from other states and their qualified caregivers may generally purchase and possess medical cannabis in the same manner as Connecticut qualifying patients and caregivers. PUBLIC IMPACT: Creates a pathway for eligible visiting patients and caregivers to use Connecticut’s medical cannabis system.	EFFECTIVE Oct. 1, 2026 PA 26-8, various sections
PRODUCT RULES THC Concentration Rules The law removes the prior 35% THC cap for non-flower plant material and the 70% cap for concentrates and other products. It also allows edible products a testing-method variance of up to plus or minus 10% around the existing five-milligram limit. PUBLIC IMPACT: Revises product-potency limits and recognizes uncertainty in edible-product testing.	EFFECTIVE Oct. 1, 2026 PA 26-8, § 79, as amended by PA 26-100, § 54

06

CANNABIS: TAXES, PRODUCTS & ENFORCEMENT

The state changes how cannabis sales are taxed and broadens coordination around illegal cannabis and controlled-substance sales.

10.75%

of sales price

A NEW SINGLE RETAIL CANNABIS TAX

The prior milligram-of-THC taxes for plant material, edibles and other cannabis are replaced by one tax based on the product's sales price.

Effective Oct. 1, 2026 | PA 26-68, § 264

REVENUE

Cannabis Tax Revenue Allocation

For fiscal years 2027 and 2028, the share of cannabis tax revenue directed to the social equity and innovation account rises from 65% to 70%. The General Fund share falls from 10% to 5%.
PUBLIC IMPACT: Redirects a larger share of cannabis tax revenue toward social equity and innovation during those two fiscal years.

EFFECTIVE

Oct. 1, 2026

PA 26-68, § 264

COORDINATION

Statewide Enforcement Board

The Statewide Cannabis and Hemp Enforcement Policy Board is renamed to include controlled substances. Its quarterly work expands to identify enforcement needs and opportunities, review national trends and best practices, and discuss certain illegal-sales issues in executive session.
PUBLIC IMPACT: Broadens statewide coordination beyond cannabis and hemp to include controlled-substance enforcement.

EFFECTIVE

Oct. 1, 2026

PA 26-8, § 13, as amended by PA 26-100, § 48

07

PSYCHEDELIC-ASSISTED THERAPY PILOT

Eligibility expands, but participation remains within a controlled research program.

IMPORTANT CLARIFICATION

This law does not create general retail or clinical access to MDMA or psilocybin. It expands eligibility for a research pilot administered through a medical school and subject to clinical and federal research requirements.

RESEARCH ACCESS

Expanded Eligibility for Connecticut Residents
Connecticut residents may participate if they are at least 18 and meet clinical criteria set by the administering medical school’s institutional review board. Previously, eligibility was limited to veterans, retired first responders and direct health care workers.
PUBLIC IMPACT: Opens the pilot to a broader group of adults who satisfy the research program’s clinical requirements.

EFFECTIVE
July 1, 2026
PA 26-108

PROGRAM CONTINUITY

Research Program Continues if Federal Scheduling Changes
The law removes the prior requirement that DMHAS end the pilot if the federal Drug Enforcement Administration approves MDMA or psilocybin for medical use.
PUBLIC IMPACT: Allows the state pilot to continue even if federal medical-use status changes.

EFFECTIVE
July 1, 2026
PA 26-108

WHAT THE PILOT INVOLVES

MDMA-ASSISTED THERAPY A synthetic psychoactive drug is used as part of an FDA-approved research protocol.	PSILOCYBIN-ASSISTED THERAPY A naturally occurring compound found in some mushrooms is used within an approved research protocol.	CLINICAL SCREENING Adults must meet criteria established by the institutional review board.
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08

GAMING PROTECTIONS

The new laws target sports-wager manipulation, underage online participation and advertising connected to colleges.

INTEGRITY

Manipulating a Sports Wager

The crime of cheating now includes offering, promising, soliciting or accepting a benefit with the intent to change the result of a sports wager when the wager or conduct occurs in Connecticut.

PUBLIC IMPACT: Treats specified sports-wager manipulation as a class D felony, punishable by up to five years in prison, a fine of up to \$5,000, or both.

EFFECTIVE

Oct. 1, 2026

PA 26-82, §§ 2-3

YOUTH PROTECTION

Underage Online Gaming Accounts and Wagers

The law clarifies that the prohibition on allowing an underage person to open an account or place wagers applies to online casino gaming and online sports wagering.

PUBLIC IMPACT: Extends existing underage protections explicitly to online platforms. A violation is a class C misdemeanor.

EFFECTIVE

Upon passage

PA 26-82, §§ 2-3

ADVERTISING

Gaming Advertising at Colleges

Licensed gaming entities may not advertise at athletic facilities on higher-education campuses or on institution-controlled websites, social media, online services or mobile apps. General-audience announcements, signs or displays are excluded.

PUBLIC IMPACT: Limits institution-specific gaming promotion in college environments while preserving general-audience communications.

EFFECTIVE

July 1, 2026

PA 26-53, § 2

09

WORKFORCE & BROADER TAX CHANGES

The source document also identifies selected compensation, wage, business-credit and consumer-tax provisions.

WORKFORCE

Selected Employee Compensation and Wage Rules

Connecticut Fire Academy adjunct instructor pay must be adjusted annually to reflect the latest state labor agreement. Tips may not count toward the minimum wage for employees of cannabis establishments, dispensaries or producers. Minor-league baseball players under a collective bargaining agreement are exempt from state minimum-wage and overtime laws.

PUBLIC IMPACT: Changes compensation rules for specific groups of workers and employers.

EFFECTIVE

July 1 and Oct. 1,
2026

PA 26-115; PA 26-12,
§§ 6 & 40

OTHER TAX CREDITS AND EXEMPTIONS HIGHLIGHTED IN THE SOURCE

• A personal-income-tax research and development credit for qualifying small businesses. • An income tax credit for eligible family caregivers with qualifying expenses. • A sales and use tax exemption for nonelectronic school supplies bought for nonbusiness use.	• Sales-tax-free week expands from a \$100 to a \$300 item limit and adds backpacks and cleated shoes. • A credit for qualifying employers that provide employee commuting benefits. • Corporate tax conformity changes related to federal research and experimental expenditure deductions.
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Public Acts: PA 26-21, PA 26-68 and PA 26-76, various sections and effective dates.

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QUICK REFERENCE

Part 1 of 2 | Health, alcohol, nicotine, public safety and selected cannabis access changes.

Change	Topic	Effective	Public Act
Alcohol permittee liability when serving a minor	Alcohol	July 1, 2026	PA 26-100, § 25
Over-the-counter opioid antagonists in public schools	Opioids	Upon passage	PA 26-38; PA 26-68
Emergency OUD bridge treatment	Opioids	Begins Jan. 1, 2027	PA 26-13, § 12
Non-opioid options for Medicaid pain treatment	Pain care	July 1, 2026	PA 26-146, § 4
Closure and sealing of threatening businesses	Local safety	Oct. 1, 2026	PA 26-8, § 53
E-cigarette dealer registration cap and penalties	Nicotine	Jan. 1, 2027	PA 26-100, § 33
Municipal rules for juice bars	Youth safety	Oct. 1, 2026	PA 26-100, § 62
Timing rule for blood and urine test reports	Legal procedure	Oct. 1, 2026	PA 26-45, §§ 2-3
Cannabis dispensing without pharmacist requirement	Cannabis retail	Upon passage	PA 26-8, §§ 31 & 67

READING THE EFFECTIVE DATE COLUMN

“Upon passage” means the provision became effective when the act became law. Some acts contain different effective dates for different sections; the Public Act should be consulted for the controlling language.

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QUICK REFERENCE

Part 2 of 2 | Cannabis, research, gaming, workforce and tax provisions.

Change	Topic	Effective	Public Act
Single 10.75% cannabis retail sales tax	Cannabis tax	Oct. 1, 2026	PA 26-68, § 264
Cannabis tax revenue allocation changes	Cannabis revenue	Oct. 1, 2026	PA 26-68, § 264
Expanded psychedelic-assisted therapy pilot eligibility	Research	July 1, 2026	PA 26-108
Out-of-state medical cannabis patients and caregivers	Medical cannabis	Oct. 1, 2026	PA 26-8
Cannabis, hemp and controlled-substances enforcement board	Enforcement	Oct. 1, 2026	PA 26-8; PA 26-100
Removal of selected THC caps; edible testing variance	Cannabis products	Oct. 1, 2026	PA 26-8; PA 26-100
Sports-wager manipulation and underage online wagering	Gaming	Upon passage / Oct. 1, 2026	PA 26-82, §§ 2-3
Gaming advertising limits at higher-education institutions	Gaming ads	July 1, 2026	PA 26-53, § 2
Selected compensation and minimum-wage provisions	Workforce	July 1 / Oct. 1	PA 26-115; PA 26-12
Selected tax credits and exemptions	Taxes	Various	PA 26-21; 26-68; 26-76

ABOUT THIS SUMMARY

This report is intended to support understanding, not to replace the full statutory language, agency guidance or professional legal advice. **For complete requirements, definitions, exceptions and implementation details, consult the cited Public Acts and relevant Connecticut state agencies.**