With the United States continuing to battle the opioid crisis and millions of adults suffering from chronic pain, many are looking toward alternative treatments. In our recent whitepaper, we discussed the possibility of using medical marijuana in place of opioids for the treatment of chronic pain. The drug remains illegal federally, but many states have taken the step to legalize marijuana in its medical form; in fact, medical marijuana is currently legal in 29 states plus the District of Columbia, and several more states have enacted limited-purpose medical marijuana laws. Additionally, eight states and the District of Columbia have legalized marijuana for recreational purposes since 2012.

As laws continue to change and regulations evolve, what do you need to know? Which states have legalized marijuana and to what extent? Which states have passed legislation denying reimbursement for medical marijuana and which have set precedent for reimbursement requirements? Scroll through our interactive map below to learn more about laws and court rulings in each state and read our whitepaper for a deep dive into the implications of medical marijuana on workers’ compensation.

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With all of this conflicting legislation, it is easy to get overwhelmed. Understanding what laws exist in each state gives us a better idea of how to proceed with workers’ compensation claims and business in general. Overall, though most states have moved toward legalization, there is no clear concept of what “medical marijuana” is. Every state has its own interpretation of what is acceptable. Beyond that, most states have not set any precedent for what insurers must do in the face of a workers’ compensation claim involving medical marijuana. A few have made headway in this area, but often these rulings are a case-by-case basis and do not set a hardline standard for all claims. Only a handful of states have required medical marijuana to be reimbursed, which we may see a trend toward in the future.

Whatever the future holds, medical marijuana is sure to continue to be an interesting topic of discussion. Follow Mitchell ScriptAdvisor on LinkedIn and Twitter to receive more updates as the topic develops.

Sources:
Map: http://www.ncsl.org/portals/1/imagelibrary/svg/canabis.svg
Other state reimbursement laws (CT, ME, MN, NJ, NM):
https://www.ncci.com/Articles/Pages/II_Marijuana-Conversation-RegLeg.aspx
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