



Facts taken from ‘Unregulated hemp derivative delta-8 thrives in Pa.’s thorny marijuana landscape’

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State lawmakers say that uneven access to marijuana has pushed consumers toward Delta-8. Some consumers have turned to it for its reported milder side effects, and because of the state’s complex cannabis landscape: Accessing medical marijuana can be time-consuming and costly, and recreational cannabis remains illegal.

Advocates of Delta-8 acknowledge that access to the medical program is limited due to cost, red tape, and meager public knowledge. Delta-8’s milder effects are popular among people who are new to marijuana. Consumers asked were not aware of any potential issues with contamination of Delta-8 products and many purchase delta-8 products online (for less than what a medical marijuana card costs).

State Sen. Judy Schwank (D., Berks) is now pushing to implement regulations that would keep Delta-8 available while ensuring it is safe to consume. Pennsylvania requires that medical marijuana be tested for lead, mercury, butane, ethanol, E. coli, and dozens of other chemicals and pesticides. No such requirement exists for delta-8. That’s led to concerns about toxicity and possible contaminants in the products. Tests that are mandatory for medical marijuana producers are completely optional for delta-8 manufacturers.

Jonathan John, a Pennsylvania-based chemist who manufactures and sells delta-8 products through his company Circus Cannabis stated that the process for manufacturing delta-8 always produces delta-9, but the lack of standardization in manufacturing techniques can make it difficult for chemists to remove the delta-9. “This is a new thing. And a lot of these people that are creating delta-8, there’s not a set recipe for them to do it,” John said. “They’re experimenting.” “Some labs will say that it doesn’t have delta-9 in it, and some labs will say it does, and it’s the same sample,” John said. “Because we don’t have to send it to a specific lab in Pennsylvania, you can kind of shop around.”

(Note: Under Pennsylvania law, delta-8 — whether produced synthetically or extracted from hemp — is a Schedule 1 controlled substance under the Controlled Substance, Drug, Device, and Cosmetic Act.)