

LSU AgCenter picks Nevada-based vendor for medical marijuana program

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Louisiana is one step closer to having a medical marijuana operation Thursday (June 15) after LSU's AgCenter selected a Nevada-based cannabis vendor to produce products for qualifying patients.

The LSU AgCenter plans to enlist GB Sciences, Inc., under a license to produce marijuana at a production facility, according to an LSU AgCenter news release. No tax dollars will be spent on the operation, which is estimated to cost \$10 million.

The university is now awaiting for approval by the LSU Board of Supervisors before the AgCenter can carry on contract negotiations with GB Sciences, the university stated. The AgCenter recommended "private sources" be used to finance the program, and LSU stated in February the contractor would fund the operation.

LSU: Medical marijuana could be ready by summer 2018

The university isn't using state funds to produce medical marijuana, so the AgCenter is looking for outside investors to subcontract with LSU.

GB Sciences is a publicly-traded medical marijuana company headquartered in Las Vegas. The AgCenter stated the company received "the highest overall score" among vendors.

Although marijuana is still federally illegal, the company's website states its "primary focus" is pharmaceutical research. The company also mentions that its license in Nevada, where both recreational and medical marijuana are legal, will enable it to sell recreational marijuana to fund its research starting July 1.

"Announced federal policy has been not to interfere with cannabis operations that are conducted in accordance with state rules regarding legalization," the company's website states.

Louisiana lawmakers enacted laws for the cultivation, production and use of medical marijuana in 2015. Gov. John Bel Edwards last year signed a bill to extend the range of conditions eligible for marijuana treatment, including glaucoma and epilepsy.

The "i" in Gov. Bobby Jindal's signature has been dotted, and Louisiana now has a law in place that allows for the legal growth, prescription and dispensing of medical marijuana. The move makes Louisiana the first state in Deep South with legal access to medical marijuana, though it's likely to take more than two years for the product to become...

Under the state's law, the marijuana must be grown indoors at an undisclosed facility located off LSU's campus. Students would not be allowed to work there.

LSU's medical marijuana programs will be regulated by the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, the Louisiana Board of Pharmacy and the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners. University officials last October stated patients will likely have access to medical marijuana by summer 2018.

LSU and Southern University are the only institutions authorized by state law to become production centers for Louisiana. Like LSU, Southern must also contract with a vendor to produce cannabis.