



Oregon's Psilocybin Therapy Program Explained



Photo credit: PsilocybinServices.org

A first-of-its-kind program to address mental health

In 2020, Oregon voters approved a ballot measure (Measure 109) to create the world's first state-regulated psilocybin therapy program to address mental health. The measure required that the Oregon Health Authority, the state agency tasked with overseeing health care policy and public health, work with a Governor-appointed board of experts to create a licensing and regulatory framework for a safe, accessible and equitable program.

Psilocybin therapy will be delivered in a licensed service center under the supervision of a trained facilitator, and psilocybin will only be consumed in the service center during that supervised session. There are no retail sales, no off-site consumption, possession or production of psilocybin. Service centers cannot be located next to schools and all clients receiving psilocybin therapy must be 21 years of age. The psilocybin used for the therapy will be monitored and tracked throughout the production and delivery process.



Research-Based

Rigorous studies at leading medical research institutions such as Johns Hopkins, UCLA, University of Alabama and NYU show that psilocybin can be effective, and provides real promise for those suffering from depression, end-of-life anxiety and addiction. The Oregon program is based on this growing body of research.

Psilocybin shows so much promise that in recent years, the FDA recently granted it a "breakthrough therapy" designation—meaning that it may demonstrate substantial improvement above and beyond what's currently available to address mental health issues.

Four-Step Process

Psilocybin therapy in Oregon is delivered in a four-step process, a model drawn from best practices in academic research settings as well as therapeutic settings from around the world.

1. Safety Assessment

Clients participate in a health screening process to determine whether a facilitator's training and practice are a good fit for each other and whether there are any contraindications that need to be taken into consideration. In some cases, clients may be ruled out from psilocybin therapy until a particular issue is resolved (such as contraindicated medications or active psychosis).

2. Preparation

The client and facilitator meet to talk about intentions for the administration session and to develop a personal safety plan. Intention-settings allow the client and facilitator to understand how to focus on particular issues during the therapy session. The safety plan includes designating emergency contacts, arranging third-party transportation home and how to approach any emotional issues that may come up before, during, or after the session.

3. Administration Session

Psilocybin is administered at a licensed service center by a trained and licensed facilitator who oversees the session and supports the participant throughout.

4. Integration

Facilitators are required to offer an integration session. Studies show that people who discuss how to integrate insights gained during the administration session into their daily lives report better well-being.



Timeline

As of December 2022, there are 3 state certified and licensed training schools actively training facilitators. In January 2023, the Oregon Health Authority will open applications for licensing for facilitators, service centers, manufacturers and testing labs. Clients may be able to access psilocybin therapy as soon as mid-2023.

Where Is It Available?

When the program is fully rolled out in 2023, psilocybin therapy will be available in 17 of the state's most populous 20 cities, and more than 2.9 million Oregonians will have access to the therapy in their local county or city.

When voters approved Measure 109 it gave cities and counties the option to delay or stop implementation locally. Some local jurisdictions, especially in rural eastern and southern Oregon, opted to let the program develop before authorizing service centers. As the program launches and matures, experts expect access to grow.

Licensing and Training

Measure 109 requires the establishment of training and licensing systems for:

- Psilocybin facilitators (who will oversee clients prior, during and after administration)
- Training schools (who provide curriculum and practicum experience for facilitators)
- Psilocybin service centers (where the therapy occurs)
- Manufacturers (producers of psilocybin from mushrooms for therapeutic use)
- Testing labs (for testing dosages)

A tracking system for all psilocybin products is also being implemented by the Oregon Health Authority.