

H.R. 2916, VA Medicinal Cannabis Research Act of 2021

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on November 4, 2021

By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2022	2022-2026	2022-2031
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	*	*	not estimated
Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	No	Mandate Effects	
Increases on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2032?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No
* = between zero and \$500,000.			

H.R. 2916 would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to conduct and support research related to the use of medical cannabis to treat veterans with chronic pain and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The bill also would authorize VA to carry out a long-term observational study of the research participants. Finally, the bill would require VA to report to the Congress on its plan to implement the requirement and provide annual updates for five years.

VA has approved several studies examining risks and benefits of using cannabis to treat PTSD and chronic pain. In February 2019, VA began a 5-year study in San Diego, California, to evaluate the effects of medical cannabis use among 136 participants with PTSD and other health conditions. In addition, VA recently designed another interventional cannabis study focused on chronic diabetic neuropathic pain and will enroll subjects in January 2022. CBO expects that those efforts would satisfy the bill's requirement for research. CBO estimates that satisfying the reporting requirement would cost less than \$500,000 over the 2022-2026 period. Such spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Etaf Khan. The estimate was reviewed by Leo Lex, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.