



GA Cannabis Industry Alliance Policy Directive

GA CIA POLICY DIRECTIVE

Formal Governing Document — Legislative & Regulatory Use

Formal Governing Document — Legislative & Regulatory Use

Georgia Cannabis Industry Alliance (GA CIA)

Policy Directive on Cannabis Transparency, Patient Protection, and Possession Reform

Issued: August 2026

Executive Summary

Mrs. Theresa Yarbrough (director and founder of Georgia cannabis Industry Alliance) and the Georgia Cannabis Industry Alliance, issues this directive to identify urgent statutory and regulatory reforms required to protect patients/cardholders, restore transparency, and align Georgia's cannabis laws with the operational realities created under SB 220. Georgia's current framework exposes cardholders to criminal liability, shields operators from public oversight, and prevents regulators from demonstrating accountability. Immediate modernization is required.

1. Repeal of the Secrecy Clause (O.C.G.A. § 16-12-206)

Georgia remains the **only** medical cannabis state where operators are exempt from Open Records Requests (ORR). This secrecy prevents public access to:

- testing data
- compliance records
- enforcement actions
- product safety information

Directive:

GA CIA calls for full repeal of the secrecy clause and restoration of ORR transparency.

Justification:

- Transparency is foundational to public trust and patient safety.
- Independent verification of product safety is impossible under secrecy.
- Georgia’s secrecy clause conflicts with national norms for cannabis oversight

Although legislators and operators have claimed the clause was intended to protect trade secrets, the statute as written shields far more than proprietary information — including testing results, contamination findings, remediation practices, and enforcement records. This level of secrecy exceeds what is necessary for legitimate business protection and undermines patient safety and public accountability.

2. Statewide Possession Reform to Protect Cardholders

Georgia’s possession statutes have not been updated to reflect SB 220’s statewide distribution framework. As a result, registered patients remain vulnerable to arrest despite holding valid Low-THC Oil Cards.

Directive:

GA CIA calls for immediate modernization of Georgia’s possession laws to:

- protect cardholders from arrest or prosecution
- establish clear statewide possession thresholds
- align statutory language with SB 220
- eliminate conflicts between enforcement and patient rights

Justification:

- Outdated statutes create inconsistent enforcement.
- Cardholders face criminal exposure despite legal access.
- Georgia cannot operate a functional medical program while criminalizing possession.

3. Independent Testing & Public Reporting Requirements

Georgia is the only state where operators test their own products without independent laboratory oversight.

Directive:

GA CIA calls for creation of a state-certified independent testing system with mandatory public reporting.

Justification:

- Independent testing is a national standard.
- Public reporting ensures accountability.
- Transparency protects patients, operators, and regulators.

4. Harmonization of Enforcement, Licensing, and Access Standards

Georgia's cannabis framework remains fragmented and inconsistent.

Directive:

GA CIA calls for a statewide modernization package including:

- standardized enforcement protocols
- statewide access protections
- harmonized manufacturing standards for hemp and cannabis
- clear regulatory authority for testing, reporting, and compliance

Justification:

- Fragmentation creates confusion for cardholders and operators.
- Harmonization strengthens public safety and economic stability.
- Modernization is necessary for future adult-use consideration.

5. Commitment to Patient Safety, Transparency, and Public Trust

GA CIA affirms that Georgia's cannabis program must prioritize:

- cardholder protection
- transparent governance
- evidence-based regulation
- statewide access
- compliance with national standards

6. Legalization of Homegrow & Cottage-Scale Patient Access

Georgia’s medical cannabis program currently provides no legal pathway for patients to cultivate their own medicine, despite:

- statewide access gaps
- limited dispensary coverage
- high product costs
- inconsistent availability
- rural access barriers
- medical necessity for strain-specific treatment
- national precedent in 38 states

SB 220 created a statewide cannabis market — but not statewide access. Homegrow is the humane, sustainable solution.

Directive:

GA CIA calls for legalization of limited homegrow and cottage-scale patient cultivation, including:

- 3–6 plants per household for registered cardholders
- micro-cultivation allowances for caregivers
- cottage-scale hemp/cannabis hybrid licensing for small farmers
- clear possession protections for homegrown medicine
- voluntary state registration system for compliance and safety

Rationale:

- Homegrow is a national medical standard.
- It protects patients from supply disruptions.
- It reduces financial burden on low-income patients.
- It ensures access to strain-specific medicine.
- It decentralizes risk in Georgia’s fragile market.
- It supports rural communities and small farmers.

- It aligns Georgia with compassionate medical policy.

7. Patient Criminal Protection Language

Georgia's enforcement culture requires explicit statutory protection, not implied protection. Possession reform alone is insufficient without clear criminal immunity for registered patients.

Directive:

GA CIA calls for codification of the following statutory protection:

“No cardholder shall be arrested, detained, or prosecuted for possession of cannabis or cannabis-derived medicine consistent with medical use.”

Justification:

- Georgia's enforcement patterns vary widely by county.
- Patients remain vulnerable even with valid state-issued cards
- Explicit statutory language is required to prevent wrongful arrest.
- Criminal protection is foundational to a functional medical program.

8. Hemp–Cannabis Regulatory Harmonization

Georgia currently regulates hemp and cannabis as separate universes, creating confusion, enforcement conflict, and unnecessary criminal exposure for farmers and manufacturers.

Directive:

GA CIA calls for full harmonization of:

- testing standards
- manufacturing standards
- enforcement protocols
- product safety rules

And protections for:

- hemp farmers

- small processors
- mixed-supply manufacturers

Justification:

- Harmonization ensures statewide consistency.
- It prevents dual-system confusion.
- It strengthens patient safety and product reliability.
- It stabilizes the industry and supports future adult-use transition.

9. Statewide Access Mandate

Georgia has no statutory requirement ensuring that cardholders across all counties have reasonable access to medical cannabis.

Directive:

GA CIA calls for establishment of:

- statewide access minimums
- rural access protections
- mobile dispensary allowances
- telemedicine certification expansion

Justification:

- Access gaps undermine the medical program.
- Rural patients face disproportionate barriers.
- Operators must be required to serve the entire state.
- Telemedicine expands equitable access.

10. Enforcement Reform

Georgia's cannabis enforcement remains inconsistent, personality-driven, and misaligned with SB 220.

Directive:

GA CIA calls for:

- statewide enforcement standards
- mandatory officer training

- patient-rights protocols
- possession-verification procedures
- de-escalation requirements

Justification:

- Enforcement varies dramatically by county.
- Patients and officers both need clarity.
- Standardization reduces conflict and wrongful arrest.
- Enforcement reform is essential for public trust.

11. Product Safety & Recall Authority

Georgia lacks basic consumer safety infrastructure for cannabis products.

Directive:

GA CIA calls for creation of:

- statewide recall authority
- public safety alert system
- mandatory contamination reporting
- adverse-event tracking

Justification:

- No recall system exists today.
- Patients have no way to know if products are unsafe.
- Regulators cannot track contamination or adverse events.
- Transparency is essential for public health.

12. Patient Education & Public Health Standards

Georgia provides no statewide patient education, dosing guidance, or provider training.

Directive:

GA CIA calls for establishment of:

- statewide patient education
- medical provider training
- dosing guidance
- product safety education
- safe-use protocols
- public health messaging

Justification:

- Education builds trust.
- Providers need training to support patients.
- Safe-use guidance reduces harm.
- Public health standards are essential for a modern medical program.

13. Fair-Trade Operator Recognition Program

To promote transparency, patient protection, and statewide trust, the Georgia Cannabis Industry Alliance will establish a **Fair-Trade Operator Recognition Program**. This program identifies and highlights operators who voluntarily align with the reforms outlined in this directive, including:

- transparency and public reporting
- independent testing
- possession modernization
- statewide access protections
- patient-centered practices
- harmonized regulatory standards

Operators who adopt these reforms will be recognized as:

- **Operators in Good Standing**
- **Fair-Trade Partners**
- **Community-Aligned Stakeholders**

This designation signals to patients, lawmakers, and the broader cannabis community that the operator is committed to ethical practices, public safety, and statewide access.

Operators who decline to support these reforms will not be listed as fair-trade partners.

This program strengthens public trust, encourages industry alignment with statewide modernization goals, and reinforces GA CIA’s commitment to transparency and patient protection.

GA CIA will continue to expand this program as statewide reforms progress, ensuring that operators who uphold transparency and patient protection are recognized accordingly.

Conclusion

Georgia's cannabis laws must evolve to reflect the needs of patients, the realities of the marketplace, and the expectations of a modern regulatory environment. GA CIA stands ready to support lawmakers, regulators, and stakeholders in implementing these reforms.