

N.J. residents favor legalization of medical psychedelic mushrooms, poll finds

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By [Bill Duhart](#) | For [NJ.com](#)

A majority of New Jerseyans approve the legalization of Psilocybin – a psychedelic drug derived from a certain variety of mushrooms – for treatment to reduce depression and anxiety, [according to a recent poll](#) by the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University.

Fifty-five percent of state residents support legalizing the treatment under a doctor’s supervision, while 20% oppose and 24% are unsure, poll results showed.

The effects of this treatment are comparable to the effects of more traditional pharmaceutical drugs used to treat depression, like selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor, or SSRI, medications, the researchers said.

The study was spurred by a [bill introduced this year in the state Senate](#) which, if signed into law, would “authorize the production and use of psilocybin...to promote health and wellness” and allow for the establishment of psilocybin service centers. The bill would also decriminalize psilocybin and expunge past related offenses.

“Based on our assessment of the public research we came to the conclusion that these therapies are very effective in helping people cope with depression and anxiety, and it also seems to be relatively safe,” Justin Ostrofsky, a Stockton faculty associate who led the study, told NJ Advance Media. “Every one of these clinical trials have shown that just one or two sessions of taking Psilocybin under professional supervision can have anti-depression and anti-anxiety effects almost immediately.”

Levels of support for legalization varied by demographics like age and partisan affiliation, with younger cohorts aged 18-49 and Democrats demonstrating higher rates of support, a news release from the Hughes Center said.

Ostrofsky said successful Psilocybin treatments could eliminate the need to take daily doses of prescribed antidepressant pills.

The Senate bill “seeks to improve the physical, mental, and social well-being of all residents of New Jersey, and to prevent and reduce the prevalence of behavioral health disorders in adults.”

The measure, sponsored by Democrat state senators Nicholas Scutari and Joseph Vitale, also seeks to “develop a long-term Statewide strategic plan for ensuring that psilocybin services become and remain a safe, accessible, and affordable treatment.”

Ostrosky said his work at the Hughes Center revolves around examining issues of public policy in the state. He said 606 people were polled this year between February 20 to March 3, with a 4% margin of error. Ninety-six percent of the respondents were reached by cell phone and 4% by landline.

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