

## Windsor-Essex businesses and health unit prepared for legal pot

Pot shop owner said industry will need many more suppliers

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 28, 2017 11:42 AM ET Last Updated: Mar 28, 2017 11:47 AM ET

Windsor business and health experts said they are prepared for the news that the federal government will announce legislation to legalize marijuana by Canada Day next year.

- [Leamington medical pot producer Aphria hits TSX](#)
- [Assembly line worker fights to use medical marijuana at work](#)

CBC News learned the [government will announce the proposed legislation](#) during the week of April 10, a change that when it comes could have significant impacts for Canada's economy.

"Right now we're supplying most of the medical market, which is about 400,000 strong in Canada and if it legalizes the recreational market is estimated to be about 5 million per year," explained Chris Jones, who co-owns a chain of Shop 420 marijuana stores across southwestern Ontario.

Once pot is legalized it will most likely be sold in a "two-tiered" system similar to the LCBO, he said. The only problem will be finding enough suppliers to meet the needs of the market.

## Amazing economic opportunity

Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce CEO Matt Marchand, said the region is uniquely equipped to grow the plants.

"It's a good opportunity for us to demonstrate, whether it's medical marijuana or tomatoes or peppers, we've got the best agricultural growers in the world."

Marchand said marijuana sales in Canada are estimated to range between \$1 billion and \$2 billion by 2024. As the country moves towards legalization the focus should be on safety and quality, he added.

- [Aphria Medical Marijuana to double its Leamington operation](#)

The Windsor-Essex County Health Unit has been preparing for recreational marijuana use for more than a year, according to manager of chronic disease and injury Eric Nadalin.

He said the organization started working on a public health plan in January 2016. Chief among the health unit's concerns are youth access to pot and the health concerns smoking any substance can have.

"In the short term there are the issues with sleepiness, fatigue, but overtime it has been tied to certain mental health issues, especially when use of cannabis begins at a young age," he explained.

Nadalin said health authorities will continue to educate the public while they wait and see what the government decides.