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# Hawaii medical marijuana dispensaries bill will become law

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[Lorin Eleni Gill](#)

Reporter- *Pacific Business News*

[Email](#)

A bill that clears the path for medical marijuana dispensaries to open for business in Hawaii as early as July 2016 is on its way to become law, with or without Gov. [David Ige's](#) signature.

The bill was not on the governor's list, released Monday, of measures he intends to veto.

"I haven't made a final decision about whether I'll sign it," Ige said at a press conference Monday. "There are some concerns about adequacy of funds provided and the aggressive timeline. People used to say any rules adopted by the state takes two years, so we're going to work really hard to make the six-month deadline."

Ige said the schedule of accepting applications and opening dispensaries for business by next summer is also challenging for the Hawaii State Department of Health.

"As we go through and finalize the rules we'll make a better determination," he said. "We're going to make our best effort to meet the deadlines."

[House Bill 321](#) requires the state and health department to adopt interim rules no later than Jan. 4, 2016.

The bill establishes a licensing system for medical marijuana dispensaries and requires that applicants have at least \$1 million in the bank. Applicants will be required to pay an application fee of \$5,000 along with a \$75,000 license fee due within seven days of acceptance by the Hawaii State Department of Health.

Selected licensees will be announced next April and distribution will begin that July.

Opening a dispensary could cost \$3 million to \$5 million, according to local criminal and civil tax attorney [Stephen Pingree](#), who has worked in Nevada for several years with their marijuana industry.

Only 16 dispensaries will be permitted statewide.

Lorin Eleni Gill covers health care, nonprofits and the University of Hawaii for Pacific Business News.