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Québec Increases Minimum Age for Cannabis Consumption to 21

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The Québec government recently ratified an *Act to tighten the regulation of cannabis* (Act), marking its latest action to impose stricter rules on cannabis consumption than those set out by the federal government.

Beginning on January 1, 2020, persons under the age of 21 will be prohibited from possessing and purchasing cannabis in Québec. Outside Québec, the minimum age for cannabis consumption is 19 in all provinces other than Alberta, which has set its minimum age at 18.

The Act marks the third measure that the Québec government has taken to impose a more restrictive approach to cannabis than the federal government's rules. First, Québec sought to outlaw individuals' growing of cannabis plants in their homes, but was blocked by a court that ruled such restriction unconstitutional. This decision is currently being appealed by the Québec government. Next, the province imposed strict regulations regarding the sale of edible cannabis, effectively barring the sale of cannabis chocolate, confectionary and other edible products that could be attractive to minors.

With the issue of growing cannabis at home still working its way through the courts, some industry and legal experts have publicly speculated on whether further challenges to the Québec government's approach to legislating the cannabis industry will be mounted. Time will tell, and we will be watching with interest.

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