

Canada drug store chain to use blockchain to trace cannabis

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A female cannabis plant: A Canadian drug store chain plans to harness blockchain technology to trace the cannabis it distributes

Canada's biggest drug store chain said Monday it plans to use blockchain technology to trace the source of the cannabis it distributes, as part of an

effort to set standards for the flourishing industry.

Shoppers Drug Mart said it was teaming up with Canadian software firm TruTrace to develop and deploy a [pilot project](#) to ensure the traceability of [medical cannabis](#).

Shoppers vice president Ken Weisbrod said that for [patients](#) to feel confident about using medical cannabis, its source must be "traceable and accountable."

"When a patient takes medication, there is an expectation that it is standardized, and they can expect consistent clinical outcomes and results.

"Although that's not always a guarantee within the medical cannabis industry at the moment, we're hoping this new program can help change that," he said.

Popularized through its use in the creation of cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin, blockchain is a decentralized digital ledger that can be used to verifiably record transactions.

The pilot project is slated to be launched this summer for deployment in pharmacies by November 2019, according to Shoppers, which has 1,300 stores.

Medical cannabis has been legal in Canada since 2001, and its recreational use was completely legalized in October 2018.

About 5.4 Canadians have purchased cannabis since October, including some 600,000 who said they had recently tried it for the first time, according to federal statistics agency.

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