

Cannabis for Medical Purposes

The ***Standards of Practice*** of the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta (“the College”) are the **minimum** standards of professional behavior and ethical conduct expected of all regulated members registered in Alberta. Standards of Practice are enforceable under the *Health Professions Act* and will be referenced in the management of complaints and in discipline hearings. The College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta also provides ***Advice to the Profession*** to support the implementation of the Standards of Practice.

Health Canada has approved the use of cannabis for medical purposes. Physicians have the choice to treat or not to treat their patient’s medical condition or symptom(s) with cannabis.

- (1) A physician who chooses not to treat patient’s medical condition or symptom(s) with cannabis should do so in accordance with the [Code of Ethics](#) and [Conscientious Objection](#) standards of practice.
- (2) A physician who chooses to treat patients with cannabis **must**:
 - (a) register with the College as an authorizer of cannabis for medical purposes,
 - (b) attempt and find conventional therapies ineffective in treating the patient’s medical condition or symptom(s),
 - (c) assess the patient’s risk of addiction using a standard addiction risk tool,
 - (d) receive informed consent¹ in accordance with the [Informed Consent](#) standard of practice,
 - (e) review available prescription databases, including the Pharmacy Information Network (PIN) and the [Triplicate Prescription Program](#) (TPP) to obtain a patient medication profile,
 - (f) comply with provincial and federal regulations, including Health Canada’s [Information for Health Care Professionals](#) and,
 - (g) complete a [patient’s medical document](#).
- (3) A patient’s medical document **must** include the:
 - (a) patient’s
 - (i) given name and surname,
 - (ii) date of birth, and

¹ See the College’s Advice to the Profession: [Informed Consent for Adults](#).

Terms used in the Standards of Practice:

- “Regulated member” means any person who is registered or who is required to be registered as a member of this College. The College regulates physicians, surgeons and osteopaths.
- “Must” refers to a mandatory requirement.
- “May” means that the physician may exercise reasonable discretion.
- “Patient” includes, where applicable, the patient’s legal guardian or substitute decision maker.

- (iii) personal health care number,
 - (b) physician's
 - (i) registration number,
 - (ii) given name and surname,
 - (iii) business address and telephone number and,
 - (iv) facsimile number and email,
 - (c) address of the location at which the physician treated the patient,
 - (d) medical condition or symptom(s) cannabis is treating,
 - (e) daily quantity of cannabis to be used by the patient expressed in grams,
 - (f) period of use specified as a number of weeks or months (not to exceed one year) beginning on the day the patient's medical document is signed and,
 - (g) physician's signature and date of signing.
- (4) A physician completing a patient medical document **must**:
- (a) evaluate the patient on a regular basis to determine the benefits and risks of cannabis as treatment for the medical condition or symptom(s) stated in the patient medical document,
 - (b) at minimum see the patient every three months following stabilization²,
 - (c) provide ongoing care to the patient for the underlying medical condition or symptom(s) for which cannabis is the treatment, including a process to identify misuse or abuse of cannabis,
 - (d) provide the College with a copy of the patient's medical document within one (1) week of completing the medical document.
- (5) A physician **must not**:
- (a) dispense or provide cannabis to any patient or person or,
 - (b) apply to become a licensed producer of cannabis.

² The stabilization phase is defined by the use of a stable amount, medical condition or symptom(s) relief and reasonable confidence that no misuse is occurring.

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