

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

Cannabis for Medical Purposes

Under Review: Yes

Issued By: Council: Apr 3, 2014 (Issued by Council: *Marihuana for Medical Purposes*)

Reissued by Council: May 3, 2017 (Name change only: *Cannabis for Medical Purposes*)

020: For Consultation

The ***Standards of Practice*** of the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta (“CPSA”) 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. CPSA also provides ***Advice to the Profession*** to support the implementation of the Standards of Practice.

Note: a glossary of terms can be found at the end of this document. Glossary terms are indicated in teal with a “^G” throughout this document.

PREAMBLE

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

While the Patient Medical Document no longer needs to be sent to CPSA, Health Canada’s requirements remain in place.

1. A regulated member **must** notify the Cannabis for Medical Purposes (CMP) Program prior to authorizing cannabis for medical purposes by **submitting^G** their name, registration number and contact information.
2. A regulated member who chooses not to treat a patient’s medical condition or symptom(s) with cannabis **must** do so in accordance with the *Code of Ethics & Professionalism^G*.
3. A regulated member providing an initial authorization for cannabis for medical purposes **must:**
 - a. discuss the risks of using cannabis with the patient and **document^G** the discussion in the patient’s record;
 - b. obtain **informed consent^G** in accordance with the *Informed Consent* standard of practice;

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.

- c. assess the patient's risk of developing a substance use disorder using a [standard risk assessment tool](#)⁶;
 - d. review a prescription database (e.g., Alberta Netcare, Pharmacy Information Network (PIN)) to obtain the patient's medication profile;
 - e. comply with provincial and federal regulations;
 - f. retain a copy of the document provided for the authorization of cannabis for medical purposes in the patient's medical record; and
 - g. document in the patient's record:
 - i. a comprehensive medical assessment of the condition to be treated with cannabis, including a history, physical examination and investigations, as appropriate; and
 - ii. conventional therapies that have been attempted to assist the patient in the management of the medical condition that have not successfully helped the patient
4. A regulated member authorizing medical cannabis for a patient **must**:
- a. evaluate the patient at least once every six months to determine the benefits and risks of cannabis as treatment for the medical condition or symptom(s) stated in the patient medical document;
 - b. provide ongoing care to the patient for the underlying medical condition or symptom(s) for which cannabis is the treatment and assess for any emerging substance use disorder(s);
 - c. review available prescription databases, including the Pharmacy Information Network (PIN) and the Triplicate Prescription Program (TPP) at least once every 6 months.
5. A regulated member **must not**:
- a. dispense or provide cannabis to any patient or person;

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- b. apply to become a licensed producer of cannabis;
- c. accept any incentives or rebates for providing authorization for cannabis for medical purposes;
- d. charge patients or licensed producers of cannabis for activities associated with authorizing medical cannabis for a patient; or
- e. authorize medical cannabis for a patient unless the physician:
 - i. has a longitudinal treating relationship with the patient (e.g., a primary care provider); or
 - ii. is in direct communication with a primary care provider who has a longitudinal treating relationship with the patient.

GLOSSARY

Submitting: to notify CPSA of your authorization of cannabis for medical purposes, please email your name, registration number and contact information to CMPIInfo@cpsa.ab.ca or via [the form on our website](#).

Code of Ethics & Professionalism: to review the *Code of Ethics & Professionalism*, please [click here](#).

Document: documentation of the discussion of risks should be done in accordance with the *Patient Record Content* standard of practice.

Informed consent: to review the *Informed Consent* standard of practice, please [click here](#). More information can be found in the [Informed Consent for Adults](#) Advice to the Profession document.

Standard risk assessment tool: a standard risk assessment tool helps analyze and evaluate factors that have the potential to cause harm to a patient.

RELATED STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

- [Advertising](#)
- [Code of Ethics & Professionalism](#)

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- [Conflict of Interest](#)
- [Continuity of Care](#)
- [Informed Consent](#)
- [Patient Record Content](#)
- [Responsibility for a Medical Practice](#)

COMPANION RESOURCES

- Advice to the Profession documents:
 - [Cannabis for Medical Purposes](#)
 - [Informed Consent for Adults](#)
 - [Continuity of Care](#)
 - [Legislated Reporting & Release of Medical Information](#)
 - [Advertising](#)
 - [Responsibility for a Medical Practice](#)
- [Information for Health Care Practitioners - Medical Use of Cannabis](#)

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