



## **For Physicians: Frequently Asked Questions about Iowa's Medical Cannabidiol Program**

- **What is the role of the physician in the program?**
  - Physicians certify that patients are eligible for the program based upon the patient's qualifying medical conditions. They also certify that a primary caregiver has a relationship to the patient and can manage the patient's well-being with respect to use of medical cannabidiol. As part of the certification process, physicians review information on the risks and benefits of medical cannabidiol use with the patient. This information is provided directly by the department on our website. Physicians do not prescribe or recommend use of medical cannabidiol.
- **How will dosing be handled for participating patients?**
  - Dosing recommendations will occur at the dispensaries, and will be based upon recommendations from the manufacturers, review of the literature, and information gathered from the patient at the dispensary.
  - Dispensaries will provide patients with a regimented titration schedule when a patient begins use of a new medical cannabidiol product. The titration schedule will consider factors like qualifying condition, patient information, and product composition. The manufacturers have developed these schedules based on review of the literature, experience in other states, and interviews with medical professionals.
- **What is the level of education and training for dispensary staff?**
  - IDPH placed substantial weight on staff education and training when scoring the applications for dispensary licenses. Please visit the websites for the dispensaries to learn more about their facilities and staff.
- **What is the legality of over-the-counter (OTC) CBD products in Iowa?**
  - Currently, CBD remains a Schedule I substance under the Controlled Substance Act. It is the position of the department that OTC CBD products are not legal in the state of Iowa unless acquired through our licensed dispensaries. Exceptions to this can be found in the [department's position statement](#).
- **What will be the total amount of medical cannabidiol products that patients are able to obtain?**
  - A patient is permitted to purchase up to a 90-day supply of each product at one time at a dispensary.
- **Can you better define the untreatable pain category?**
  - "*Untreatable pain*" means any pain whose cause cannot be removed and, according to generally accepted medical practice, the full range of pain management modalities appropriate for the patient has been used without adequate result or with intolerable side effects.
- **Are there any legal concerns with participating in the program?**
  - Iowa law protects physicians from the threat of criminal prosecution and from disciplinary actions by the Iowa Board of Medicine, provided that physicians follow the rules and regulations governing the medical cannabidiol program. In addition, physicians are certifying a patient's qualifying condition, not prescribing medical cannabidiol to a patient. See [Iowa Code 124E.12](#) for a description of affirmative defenses for physicians and their employees.
- **Should I be concerned about my patient combining medical cannabidiol with opiates?**
  - We have suggested some references below that address this issue.
- **What is known about drug interactions with medical cannabidiol?**
  - The department's [Patient Information Sheet for Health Care Practitioners](#) provides information on therapeutic uses of medical cannabidiol, including potential benefits and side effects, contraindications, and drug interactions.
- **How can I be more involved in my patient's participation?**
  - After certification, physicians are encouraged to maintain a dialogue with their patients about how the patient responds to medical cannabidiol.
  - MedPharm Iowa recommends that patients and physicians complete a patient intake form together to identify the most effective treatment options as well as any potential risks.

- **Will dispensaries have a doctor or pharmacist on staff?**
  - No, physicians and pharmacists are not allowed by law to be on staff at the dispensaries at this time.

## Opioid-related References

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