

# Cannabis for Medical Purposes

## 1. Introduction

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### 1.1. Description

Cannabis (marijuana, marihuana) has not been issued a Notice of Compliance (NOC) by Health Canada, due to the lack of sufficient scientific evidence that establishes the safety and efficacy of cannabis, to the extent required for the marketing of drugs in Canada. As cannabis has not been marketed as a drug, Pharmacy Services does not purchase, stock or supply the product.

As of October 17, 2018, the current legislation, entitled Cannabis Regulations replaced all other previous regulations. Under the Cannabis Regulations, individuals may purchase cannabis for medical or non-medical purposes. Individuals with a medical need are able to purchase cannabis for medical purposes from [Federally Licensed Sellers](#) or from [Provincially Licensed Retailers](#).

### 1.2. Scope

This policy applies to all VCH and PHC [Staff](#) and [Patients, Clients, and/or Residents](#) and focuses on the use of cannabis for medical purposes in [Licensed Health Care Facilities](#) within Vancouver Coastal Health and Providence Health Care Acute, Long-term Care, Assisted Living and Community Services.

The purpose of this policy is to outline parameters for prescribing, accessing, administering, and storing cannabis for medical purposes.

## 2. Policy

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### 2.1. General Requirements

Cannabis for medical purposes may be approved for use by Patients, Clients, and Residents in VCH and PHC facilities, provided that:

- The Patient, Client, and/or Resident have required documentation for [Medical Cannabis](#) (See sections below).
- The prescriber has written an order for Medical Cannabis;
- The Patient, Client, and/or Resident has their own supply or is able to procure their own supply;
- The Patient's, Client's, and/or Resident's own supply of Medical Cannabis is:
  - purchased from a Federally Licensed Seller or a Provincially Licensed Retailer;
  - in oil form, intended for oral administration (including in gel capsules);
  - in a format that facilitates a measureable dose (milligrams of active ingredient);
  - in a format that does not require further manipulation prior to administration; and
  - stored in its original container.

### 2.1.1. Approved Format and Route of Administration

[Cannabis Oil](#), intended for oral administration, in compliance with the requirements set out in section 2.1, is the only format approved for use in Licensed Health Care Facilities, and must comply with the requirements above.

Alternate formats for Medical Cannabis are not permitted. For greater clarity, formats that are not permitted include, but are not limited to: baked goods; candy or other edible treat formats; teas; smoking or vapour products; topical products; suppositories; and Cannabis Oil mixed into foods or other liquids.

Smoking and vaporizing of Medical Cannabis is not permitted at Licensed Health Care Facilities or on Health Organization grounds.

Nurses must administer prescriber-ordered Medical Cannabis to the Patient, Client and/or Resident in accordance with this policy.

### 2.1.2 Medical Cannabis Orders

The prescriber's order for Patient's, Client's, and/or Resident's own Medical Cannabis must specify form, strength, dose, route (oral), and frequency. Prescribers orders must meet the requirements of a medication order as stipulated in the [Medication Order Requirements Policy](#).

### 2.1.3 Documentation Required from the Patient, Client, and/or Resident

The Patient, Client, and/or Resident is responsible for providing the appropriate documentation that indicates that their cannabis supply is intended for medical use. Appropriate documentation includes:

- [Registration Document](#) issued by a Federally Licensed Seller; or
- [Registration Certificate](#) issued by Health Canada for possession only.

This documentation must be reviewed by the prescriber prior to the prescriber writing the order.

### 2.1.4 Supply

#### *Patients', Clients' and/or Residents' responsibilities with respect to supply*

Patients, Clients, and/or Residents who have their own supply of Medical Cannabis must ensure that their supply and associated documentation meets all requirements set out in section above.

Patients, Clients, and/or Residents who do not have their own supply may access Medical Cannabis as per the processes outlined in [Appendix A: "Procedures for Accessing Cannabis for Medical Purposes."](#)

Pharmacy Services responsibilities with respect to supply

Pharmacy Services must:

- Confirm that the Patient's, Client's, and/or Resident's Medical Cannabis supply was accessed via a Federally Licensed Seller or a Provincially Licensed Retailer by consulting the Health Canada list of Federally Licensed Sellers to confirm the manufacturer;
- Ensure that the product form and strength corresponds to the medication order;
- Follow standard processes for identification, verification, and labelling of the Patient's, Client's, and/or Resident's own Medical Cannabis supply as per the "Patient's Own Medications" policy; and
- Follow standard processes for secure handling of the Patient's, Client's, and/or Resident's own Medical Cannabis supply, as per Lower Mainland Pharmacy Services policy "Narcotics and Controlled Drugs – Distribution by Pharmacy Services – LMPS."

2.1.5 Storage, Access, and Accountability

Medical Cannabis must be stored in the same manner as other controlled substances, accessible only by authorized personnel. As with other Patient's, Client's, and/or Resident's own controlled substances, Medical Cannabis must be handled in a manner that permits an audit or investigation to be conducted, accompanied by a signature trail and written documentation, as outlined in facility procedures

2.1.6 Discharge

On discharge, the Patient, Client, and/or Resident must take their remaining supply of Medical Cannabis with them.

2.1.7 Documentation

Staff must document the Patient's, Client's, and/or Resident's use of Medical Cannabis on the Medication History or Medication Reconciliation Forms. The order for Medical Cannabis must be processed by Nursing and Pharmacy Staff so that it appears on the Medication Administration Record. Staff must document administration of Medical Cannabis on the Medication Administration Record.

## 2.2. Responsibilities

2.2.1 Prescriber

- Review Patient, Client, and/or Resident documentation indicating that the Medical Cannabis supply is intended for medical purposes.
- Write the order for Medical Cannabis.
- Complete a [Medical Document](#) for the Patient, Client, and/or Resident, if procurement of supply is necessary.

### 2.2.2 Patient, Client, and/or Resident

- Provide the appropriate documentation indicating that their Medical Cannabis supply is intended for medical use (see section 2.1.3).
- Provide own legal supply of Cannabis Oil.
- Do not bring edible cannabis formats to Licensed Health Care Facilities or on Health Organization grounds.
- Do not smoke or vape in Licensed Health Care Facilities or on Health Organization grounds.
- Take their remaining supply of Medical Cannabis with them on discharge.

### 2.2.3 Nurse

- Process orders for Medical Cannabis.
- Ensure Medical Cannabis is stored in the same manner as other controlled substances.
- Perform perpetual inventory counts of Medical Cannabis in the same manner as other controlled substances.
- Administer Medical Cannabis.
- Document administration of Medical Cannabis.
- Return any remaining supply to Patient, Client, and/or Resident on discharge

### 2.2.4 Pharmacy Services

- Confirm that the Patient's Medical Cannabis supply was accessed via a Federally Licensed Seller or a Provincially Licensed Retailer by consulting the Health Canada list of Federally Licensed Sellers to confirm the manufacturer.
- Ensure that the product form and strength corresponds to the medication order.
- Follow standard processes for identification, verification, and labelling of the Patient's, Client's, and/or Resident's own Medical Cannabis supply.
- Follow standard processes for secure handling of the Patient's own Medical Cannabis supply.

## 2.3. Compliance

Staff are responsible for adhering to this Policy and monitoring their activities in accordance with the Policy. Failure by Staff to comply with this Policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, services or privileges.

## 3. Supporting Documents and References

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### 3.1. Related Policies

- [Cannabis for Non-Medical Purposes](#)
- [Cannabis for Non-Medical Purposes \(PHC\)](#)
- [Medication Order Requirements](#)

- [Smoke-Free Premises](#)
- [Smoke and Vape-Free Premises \(PHC\)](#)
- [Orders Management](#)

### 3.2. Guidelines, Procedures and Forms

- [Narcotics and Controlled Drugs: Documentation \(PHC\)](#)
- [Narcotics and Controlled Drugs: Counting and Auditing \(PHC\)](#)
- [Narcotics and Controlled Drugs: Keys, Access to Storage \(PHC\)](#)
- [Cannabis for Withdrawal Management-COVID-19 \(PHC\)](#)

### 3.3. Appendices

[Appendix A: Accessing Cannabis for Medical Purposes Procedure](#)

### 3.4. References

B.C. College of Nurses and Midwives. (n.d). Cannabis Resource Centre. Retrieved from: [https://www.bccnp.ca/Standards/all\\_nurses/resources/Pages/Cannabis.aspx](https://www.bccnp.ca/Standards/all_nurses/resources/Pages/Cannabis.aspx)

Cannabis Act, (S.C. 2018, c. 16). Retrieved from: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-24.5/page-1.html>. Accessed

Cannabis Regulations, (SOR/2018-144). Retrieved from: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2018-144/>

College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia. (2019, April). Practice Standard: Cannabis for Medical Purposes. Retrieved from: <https://www.cpsbc.ca/files/pdf/PSG-Cannabis-for-Medical-Purposes.pdf>

Government of Canada. (2018, October 17). Cannabis for medical purposes under the Cannabis Act: information and improvements. Possession and personal storage limits under the Cannabis Act. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-medication/cannabis/medical-use-cannabis.html>

Health Canada. (2016, July). Consumer Information – Cannabis. Retrieved from [https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/hc-sc/migration/hc-sc/dhp-mps/alt\\_formats/pdf/marihuana/info/cons-eng.pdf](https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/hc-sc/migration/hc-sc/dhp-mps/alt_formats/pdf/marihuana/info/cons-eng.pdf)

Health Canada. (2018, October). Information for Health Care Professionals: Cannabis (marihuana, marijuana) and the cannabinoids. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/medical-use-marijuana/information-medical-practitioners/information-health-care-professionals-cannabis-marihuana-marijuana-cannabinoids.html>

Health Canada. (2019, May 06). Licensed cultivators, processors and sellers of cannabis under the Cannabis Act. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-medication/cannabis/licensed-producers/authorized-licensed-producers-medical-purposes.html>

Tobacco and Vapor Products Control Act, [RSBC 1996] Chapter 451. Retrieved from: [http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96451\\_01](http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96451_01)

### 3.5. Keywords

cannabis, medical cannabis, medical marihuana, marijuana

## 4. Definitions

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**“Cannabis Oil”** means an oil that contains anything referred to in item 1 or 3 of Schedule 1 to the *Cannabis Act* and that is in liquid form at a temperature of  $22 \pm 2^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

**“Federally Licensed Seller”** is the holder of a license issued by Health Canada under the *Cannabis Regulations*. Federally Licensed Sellers are authorized to possess, produce, sell, provide, ship, deliver, transport and destroy fresh or dried cannabis, cannabis oil, or cannabis seeds or plants for propagation to eligible persons. See: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-medication/cannabis/licensed-producers/authorized-licensed-producers-medical-purposes.html> (or search in a web browser using the terms “Health Canada Authorized Licensed Sellers of Cannabis for Medical Purposes.”)

**“Licensed Health Care Facilities”** are those facilities owned, operated, and licensed by the health organization to provide health care services under the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*, and in line with the legal definition of a hospital under the *Narcotic Control Regulations*.

**“Medical Document”** – Per the *Cannabis Regulations*, a Medical Document means a document provided by a health care practitioner to support the use of cannabis for medical purposes.

**“Medical Cannabis”** is cannabis obtained by the Patient, from a Federally Licensed Seller or a Provincially Licensed Retailer. Authorization to possess Medical Cannabis accessed from a Federally Licensed Seller is in the form of a Registration Document, while authorization to possess Medical Cannabis from a Provincially Licensed Retailer is in the form of a Registration Certificate.

**“Patient, Client, and/or Resident”** means all people receiving care or services from VCH and PHC.

**“Provincially Licensed Retailer”** is the holder of a license issued by the province of B.C. Provincially licensed retailers may be accessed on line or via retail outlets. The B.C. Liquor Distribution Branch purchases cannabis from Federally Licensed Sellers and distributes to Provincially Licensed Retailers.

**“Registration Certificate” for possession only** is a certificate issued by Health Canada that enables individuals to possess greater than 30 grams of dried marijuana (or its equivalent) and obtain such an amount from a Provincially Licensed Retailer, for possession only. Patients must produce a Medical Document and register with Health Canada to obtain a Registration Certificate. Due to the relatively recent nature of the *Cannabis Act* and *Cannabis Regulations*, this definition may change over time.

**“Registration Document”** is a document issued to the Patient by a Federally Licensed Seller upon registering with the Federally Licensed Seller. The registration process, requiring an original Medical Document, is unique to each Federally Licensed Seller. Due to the relatively recent nature of the *Cannabis Act* and *Cannabis Regulations*, this definition may change over time.

**“Staff”** means all employees (including management and leadership), Medical Staff Members (including physicians, midwives, dentists and Nurse Practitioners), residents, fellows and trainees, health care professionals, students, volunteers, contractors and other service providers engaged by PHC or VCH.

## 5. Questions

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Contact: Lower Mainland Pharmacy Services or your local pharmacy department.

## Appendix A: Accessing Cannabis for Medical Purposes Procedure

1. Consult with your health care practitioner
2. Obtain a Medical Document from your health care practitioner
  - See sample [Medical Document](#) available via Health Canada Website

Purchase from a federally licensed seller	OR	Purchase from a provincially licensed retailer
3. Choose a federally licensed seller <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See list of authorized licensed sellers available via Health Canada Website at <a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/medical-use-marijuana/authorized-licensed-producers/authorized-licensed-producers-medical-purposes.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/medical-use-marijuana/authorized-licensed-producers/authorized-licensed-producers-medical-purposes.html</a></li> </ul>		3. Submit the <a href="#">medical document</a> to Health Canada via online registration process to obtain a registration certificate, for possession only
4. Complete a registration form specific to that licensed seller, as per instructions on licensed seller website		4. Purchase via provincially licensed retailers (on-line or storefront, where available)
5. Mail original <a href="#">medical document</a> to the licensed seller. (Health care practitioner may fax the document via secure fax)		<a href="https://www.bccannabisstores.com">https://www.bccannabisstores.com</a>
6. Order on-line or by telephone from the licensed seller once registration is complete		
7. Await shipment via Canada Post. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delivery to an acute care health facility is not permitted</li> <li>- Delivery will be accompanied by a registration document</li> </ul>		

**Note:** Due to the time required for registration and receipt of product (from on-line retailers), this process may be more pertinent to Patients with longer stays, such as residential care settings.