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"We change laws."

Medical Conditions to Include in Medical Marijuana Legislation

Medical cannabis legislation allows patients to obtain a medical marijuana card if they have a qualifying medical condition and if a licensed physician believes they are likely to receive therapeutic or palliative benefit from the use of medical marijuana.

The following medical conditions should be included in medical marijuana legislation.

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS): ALS is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and the spinal cord, progressively reducing the ability of the brain to initiate and control muscle movement. Research indicates that cannabinoids provide neuroprotection, which may delay the progression of this devastating disease. Some ALS patients report that medical marijuana has helped alleviate their symptoms, such as pain, appetite loss, depression, and drooling.

Cachexia (wasting syndrome) and nausea: Marijuana's active components (cannabinoids) can both stimulate appetite and reduce the nausea, vomiting, and weight loss experienced by patients in many circumstances, including the side effects of drug therapies given for cancer, HIV infection, and hepatitis C. Observational studies suggest this may improve treatment adherence among patients experiencing gastrointestinal toxicity from drug therapy.

Cancer: Marijuana has been shown to be effective at relieving symptoms such as nausea, appetite loss, and vomiting that often accompany chemotherapy and other treatments. This is vitally important because 20% of cancer deaths are associated with wasting.

HIV/AIDS: Marijuana can reduce the nausea, vomiting, and loss of appetite caused by both by the illness and its treatments. By relieving these side effects, medical marijuana increases the ability of patients to stay on life-extending treatments.

Crohn's disease/inflammatory bowel disease: While there is no cure for Crohn's disease, a recent study from Israel using a strain that contained 23% THC found that it eased suffering in 10 out of 11 patients, with five patients going into complete remission. Similarly, survey data published in European Journal of Gastroenterology & Hepatology found, "Cannabis use is common amongst patients with IBD for symptom relief, particularly amongst those with a history of abdominal surgery, chronic abdominal pain and/or a low quality of life index."

Glaucoma: Patients using marijuana to treat glaucoma, a leading cause of blindness in the U.S., have found it can reduce intraocular pressure, relieve pain, slow, and in some cases completely stop further damage to the eyes.

Lupus: Cannabis helps relieve pain and inflammation caused by lupus without the side effects caused by other medications. Cannabis also helps treat symptoms of nausea and abdominal cramping, which often occur with drugs commonly prescribed for lupus, such as Plavix and corticosteroids.

Spasms, including those caused by multiple sclerosis: Clinical trials involving whole-plant marijuana and various marijuana extracts have found that patients reported relief of muscle stiffness, pain, and spasticity. In a 2007 study from the *European Journal of Neurology*, with whole-plant based treatment (with both CBD and THC) compared with a placebo 40% of the subjects saw a reduction of spasticity of more than 30%, while 17.5% of the subjects saw a reduction of more than 50%.

Parkinson's disease: Parkinson's can be dramatically improved by using medical cannabis. Researchers reported that smoked administration of the drug created "significant" improvement in the symptoms suffered by research subjects including dramatically decreased rigidity, tremors, and pain, and increased ability to properly rest. Patients also reported that the effects lasted for as long as three hours. No adverse effects were reported.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD): Post-traumatic stress disorder is a serious condition that involves a person developing characteristic symptoms — such as flashbacks, numbing, and avoidance — after experiencing an extremely traumatic stressor. Available treatments are often dangerous or ineffective. Thousands of patients have turned to medical cannabis for help, and states are increasingly adding PTSD to their lists of qualifying conditions for medical cannabis. In Israel, an open pilot study found marijuana effective at alleviating combat veterans' symptoms. In addition, other human and animal evidence supports the therapeutic potential of cannabis in treating PTSD.

Rheumatoid arthritis: Cannabis can reduce inflammation, stiffness, pain, and problems with mobility associated with arthritis. Using cannabis to treat arthritis also allows patients to reduce the use of other drugs such non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).

Severe pain: While prescription medicines and surgical procedures work for some patients, others' pain is resistant to treatment. Even for patients who respond to prescription medicines, those medications can be far more dangerous than cannabis, both in terms of toxicity and addictive potential. A series of randomized clinical trials on smoked cannabis and neuropathic pain consistently indicated that cannabis significantly reduced pain intensity. Another clinical trial, conducted in 2011, found that vaporized cannabis augments the analgesic effect of opioids in chronic pain patients. The authors explained, "The combination (of opioids and cannabinoids) may allow for opioid treatment at lower doses with fewer side effects."

Terminal illnesses: Terminal illnesses often involve numerous symptoms that cannabis can alleviate, including wasting, anxiety, sleep problems, nausea, and severe pain.