

Talking To Your Doctor



“Modern medical research has confirmed the beneficial uses of cannabis in treating or alleviating the pain, nausea and other symptoms associated with a variety of debilitating medical conditions...” *-The State of Illinois*

Did you know? Cannabis was listed in the United States pharmacopeia national formulary from 1850 until 1942. It was prescribed for various conditions including labor pains, nausea, and rheumatism.

The Illinois Department of Public Health has expressed its commitment to the success of the compassionate use of Medical Cannabis Pilot Program (MCP) and the Opioid Alternative Pilot Program (OAPP)

When talking to your physician, describe Specifically:

- Any symptoms; any diagnosed conditions
- What you are currently doing to treat your condition or symptoms
- In what form and how often you are medicating
- Bring any available medical records you may have

Explain what you hope to gain from the use of medical cannabis. For example, do you want to restore appetite? Relieve pain, nausea, vomiting, or other symptoms caused by your condition or the medications used to treat your medical condition?

Explain the desire to stop or reduce prescription medications such as opioids.

Let your Doctor know you are aware of some of the side effects that may occur, such as: dry mouth, dry or red eyes, headache, dizziness, drowsiness, or anxiety.

Be Prepared to discuss with your doctor the benefits of medical cannabis versus the risks. Explain any experience with cannabis.

Remind your doctor that he or she is not writing a prescription, but giving a written certification

Qualifying patients who apply for a medical cannabis registry ID card for the MCP must have their debilitating medical condition certified by a physician. The OAPP allows access to medical cannabis for individuals who have or could receive a prescription for opioids as certified by a physician .

The physician must:

- Have a bona-fide physician-patient relationship with the qualifying patient. The bona-fide physician-patient relationship may not be limited to issuing a written certification or a consultation simply for that purpose.
- Have responsibility for the ongoing care and treatment of the qualifying patient's debilitating condition, provided that the ongoing treatment and care shall not be limited to or for the primary purpose of certifying a debilitating medical condition or providing a consultation solely for that purpose.
- Complete an in-person full assessment of the patient's medical history and current medical condition, including a personal physical examination prior to completing the physician certification.
- Certify the qualifying patient is under the physician's care, either for the qualifying patient's primary care or for his or her debilitating medical condition or symptoms of a debilitating medical condition.

Prescription opioids are often used to treat moderate to severe pain and prescribed following surgery or injury, for chronic pain, osteoarthritis or for other health conditions such as cancer. With a nationwide epidemic of opioid addiction and overdose, people are seeking safe, alternative treatment options. Many have turned to medical cannabis. Cannabis is historically and widely used as an analgesic (reduces pain) and anti-inflammatory remedy. The entourage effect of the cannabinoids in cannabis are helping people reduce or stop prescription opioid use. Data from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) indicates opioid deaths in Illinois increased 13 percent from 2016 to 2017. The Opioid Alternative Pilot Program (OAPP) is designed to provide people with an option to manage their pain. The long-term goal of this program is to reduce opioid deaths.

Remember, for a physician to certify a qualifying patient for a medical cannabis card, there must be a bona fide physician-patient relationship. The bona-fide physician-patient relationship may not be limited to issuing a written certification for the patient or a consultation simply for that purpose.

Important points:

- The *Physician Written Certification* **does not constitute a prescription** for medical cannabis. It is an acknowledgement and confirmation to the State of the patient's qualifying condition.
- Qualifying patients do not need to pay a special fee to their physician for the physician written certification. The physician may accept payment for the fee associated with the personal physical examination required prior to issuing the written certification.
- For a terminal illness application, a physician needs to complete and sign the *physician confirmation of diagnosis of terminal illness* page of the *Application for Registry Identification Card for Persons Diagnosed with Terminal Illness*. Or for online
- Veterans receiving health care at a VA facility do not need to provide a *physician written certification* but must instead provide medical records from the VA facility for the last 12 months.

HCI Alternatives is committed to giving patients a safe and comfortable place to come for an alternative medicinal choice. Our patient's success stories inspire us and confirm why the recorded use of cannabis as medicine goes back thousands of years. Our company is committed to assisting health care professionals as well as patients with guidance regarding the application process, understanding the law, methods of ingestions, product options, or answering any questions about cannabis and the industry.

We are happy to assist any individual or group with questions regarding Illinois' Medical Cannabis Program or the Opioid Alternative Program. Please feel free to reach out to our Community Outreach Coordinator, Christine Karhliker at ckarhliker@hckillinois.com. We can assist in cannabis education or navigation of the program, in your facility or our meeting space.

Explore our website for helpful information and links:

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This information is not meant to be construed as medical advice. Always seek the advice of your physician before starting any new treatment or discontinuing an existing treatment with medical cannabis.

HCI Alternatives does not accept, nor seek patient referrals from physicians. This information is intended to be used for educational purposes regarding Illinois' medical cannabis pilot program.

Cannabis is a schedule 1 controlled substance under Federal Law. For additional cannabis research, warnings, and health effects, please visit the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) at www.drugabuse.gov