**MediCal Use of Cannabis**

**POLICY:**

**DEFINITIONS:** Cannabis is often referred to as marihuana or marijuana. These terms were historically intended to stigmatize the recreational use of cannabis and are best avoided in a clinical context.

This policy provides guidance regarding the use of Medical Cannabis for patients at Northumberland Hills Hospital. The policy aligns with the current legislation *Access to Cannabis for Medical Purposes Regulations* (ACMPR) which indicates that individuals with a medical need, and who have the authorization of their prescriber, are able to access cannabis for medical purposes from Health Canada authorized licensed producers.

The policy also follows the guiding principles from the College of Nurses of Ontario which allows for authorized individuals to possess cannabis for medical purposes. These same regulations allow other (including nurses) to possess the cannabis for the sake of assisting the authorized individual in taking the medical cannabis. Nurses are encouraged to review the ACMPR as, depending on the practice setting, there are limits on the amount of marijuana they can possess. From the standpoint of ethical nursing practice, the nurse has a role to facilitate the client’s actions and choices including providing assistance to clients who cannot take their own medical cannabis independently.”

“If you practice in a hospital setting, there is an exemption under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, that authorizes certain hospital employees, including nurses, to directly administer medical marijuana to clients(as opposed to assisting). For more information about this exemption, including the conditions that must be met, please read Health Canada’s Section 56 Class Exemption to Authorize the Conduct of Activities with Cannabis in Hospitals.

As with administering any drugs to clients, nurses are accountable for adhering to the College’s Medication practice standard. Nurses must ensure that they are able to administer the medication safely, competently and manage the potential outcomes of administering it.

**PROCEDURE:**

**For inpatient units:**

1. As Cannabis has not been marketed as a drug (no issued Notice of Compliance by Health Canada), the drug will not be purchased by NHH pharmacy and as such patients own medication will be used.
2. Cannabis will only be dispensed in oil, liquids or capsules that can be provided orally. Inhaled, vapourized, and topical products will not be permitted on hospital premises as per the [non-smoking policy ADM IV-028](http://infoweb.nhh.local/Policies%20and%20Procedures/Published%20Library/Smoking%20Policy.pdf)
3. The Most responsible practitioner as well as pharmacy must verify that the product is an authorized product purchased from a Health Canada licensed producer.
4. The prescriber will write an order that will include dose, route, strength and frequency.
5. Patient’s own medication will be stored on the unit in the medication room in a locked vault. The MRN will be responsible for dispensing this medication. An independent double check will be required when withdrawing doses and both signatures are required on the [Patient’s Own Cannabis Log #304](http://infoweb.nhh.local/Forms/Published%20Library/304.doc) . One log should be used per patient per encounter.
6. Administration of Medical Cannabis will be documented in the patient’s EMAR as per hospital policy regarding documentation of patient’s own medication.
7. On discharge, the [Patient’s Own Cannabis Log #304](http://infoweb.nhh.local/Forms/Published%20Library/304.doc) should be scanned in to the patient’s record.
8. On discharge, cannabis should be returned to the patient or disposed of in accordance with [Storage and Use of Patient’s Own Medication policy](https://nhhonca.sharepoint.com/sites/Policies%20and%20Procedures/Published%20Library/Forms/Default%20View.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FPolicies%20and%20Procedures%2FPublished%20Library%2FStorage%20and%20Use%20of%20Patient%5Fs%20Own%20Medications%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FPolicies%20and%20Procedures%2FPublished%20Library) (MED I-150).

**In the Emergency Department:**

1. Patient’s own medication will be locked in the drawer in the medication room while the patient remains in the department.
2. Nurses can dispense the drug as per the current process related to narcotics and controlled drugs. [MED I-330 Narcotics and Controlled Substances.](http://infoweb.nhh.local/Policies%20and%20Procedures/Published%20Library/Narcotics%20and%20Controlled%20Substances.pdf)
3. Should patient be admitted the Medical Cannabis will be verified by the pharmacy, then stored in the vault on the nursing unit and used as patient’s own medication.

Staff at NHH will not be responsible for purchasing cannabis – patients and families will be informed if the supply of cannabis is running low and will be expected to purchase and supply any further required stock for the patient’s needs.

**REFERENCES:**

College of Nurses of Ontario (2022). <http://www.cno.org/en/learn-about-standards-guidelines/educational-tools/ask-practice/medical-marijuana/>

Government of Canada (Reviewed 2022). Cannabis Act. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-24.5/fulltext.html>

Government of Canada (Reviewed 2022). Cannabis Regulations. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2018-144/>