

# NJSNA Releases Updated Position Statement on Therapeutic Use of Medicinal Cannabis



The NJSNA Congress on Policy and Practice (COPP) is pleased to announce the publication of the newly revised position statement, "Therapeutic Use of Medicinal Cannabis." This essential document, which includes the [NJSNA Medicinal Cannabis Fact Sheet](#), provides nurses with updated, evidence-based guidance on this important and evolving area of patient care. This comprehensive revision was made possible by the dedicated efforts of the COPP Position Statement Subcommittee over many months. We extend our sincere gratitude to Leticia Chin, MSN, RN, CCRN, Margaret Daingerfield, EdD, RN, CNE, Sandra Foley, DNP, RN, Paula Greenbaum, MSN, RN, CMSRN, NPD-BC, CHPN, Laurie Huryk, MSN, RN, NI-BC, Susan H. Weaver, PhD, RN, CRNI, NEA-BC, and Ken Wolski, MPA, RN for their expertise and tireless work on this project. All members are encouraged to review the statement and fact sheet to inform their practice.

<https://njsna.org/position-statements/>

## New Jersey State Nurses Association (NJSNA) Position Statement Therapeutic Use of Medicinal Cannabis

The position of NJSNA is to support the therapeutic use of medicinal cannabis in patient care based on current New Jersey law. NJSNA concurs with the American Nurses Association (ANA) position statement *Therapeutic Use of Marijuana and Related Cannabinoids* (2021) and the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) *Guidelines for Nursing Care of the Patient Using Medical Marijuana*, emphasizing "the nurse shall approach the patient without judgment regarding the pa-

tient's choice of treatment or preferences in managing pain and other distressing symptoms" (NCSBN, 2018, p. S26).

### Explanation of Issues

New Jersey's Medicinal Cannabis Program (MCP) enables registered patients to access regulated cannabis-based medicine under licensed healthcare practitioners' care.

- Physicians, Advanced Practice Nurses, Physician Assistants may recommend medicinal cannabis.
  - Marijuana, a Schedule I drug, is illegal; therefore, licensed prescribers may not prescribe but recommend/refer to an Alternative Treatment Centers (ATC) for evaluation and dispensing of appropriate cannabis product.
- Medicinal cannabis is dispensed at state-licensed ATCs in oral, topical, or inhaled forms.
- Two designated caregivers may obtain and administer medicinal cannabis product to the patient.
- Patients may smoke medicinal cannabis in any location where smoking is permitted (New Jersey Compassionate Use Medical Cannabis Act [Jake Honig Act], 2019; State of New Jersey, n.d.).

### Explanation/Definition of Terms

The *Jake Honig Compassionate Use Medical Cannabis Act* was signed into law in 2019 by Governor Phil Murphy. This legislation expanded patient access to medicinal cannabis by:

- increasing the qualifying medical conditions;
- establishing additional ATCs across the state;

- increasing the limit of cannabis dispensed to 3 ounces in a 30-day period with a review every 18 months;
- eliminating restriction on ounces dispensed to terminally ill and hospice patients,
- expanding the authorization period to one year;
- allowing edible form for both adults and minors;
- phasing out the three-year medicinal cannabis sales tax program by 2022,
- authorizing APNs and PAs to issue written instructions for medicinal cannabis for registered qualifying patients; and
- outlining employment protection for patients: the employer cannot take adverse employment actions against employees solely based on their status as medicinal cannabis patient.

This legislation did clarify that nothing in the law requires the employer to allow consumption of medicinal cannabis during work hours or do anything that could result in the loss of federal funding. Additionally, the Jake Honig Act addressed allowance of two designated caregivers, state reciprocity guidelines for out of state medicinal cannabis visitor's access to MCP for supplies, rules for monthly price listing of medicinal cannabis for dispensaries, home delivery services by ATCs, and creation of the Cannabis Regulatory Commission (New Jersey Compassionate Use Medical Cannabis Act [Jake Honig Act], 2019; State of New Jersey, 2019).

Although not yet implemented, the Jake Honig Act also calls for medicinal cannabis dosing and administration guidelines, education for providers, and implementation of institutional

## Resources

### 1. NJSNA Medicinal Cannabis Fact Sheet

New Jersey Nurses are encouraged to review the NJSNA Medicinal Cannabis Fact Sheet with additional information related to specific questions about safe nursing practice and use of medicinal cannabis in New Jersey.

### 2. Cannabis Nursing

In 2023, the ANA officially recognized cannabis nursing as a nursing specialty focused on the care of health care consumers seeking education and guidance in therapeutic cannabis use, as identified by the American Cannabis Nurses Association (ACNA).

<https://www.nursingworld.org/news/news-releases/2023/ana-officially-recognizes-cannabis-nursing-as-a-specialty-nursing-practice/>

### 3. Rescheduling of Marijuana

On July 17, 2024, ANA supported rescheduling cannabis from Schedule I to Schedule III, citing its therapeutic benefits and the need for further research. ANA urged the Department of Justice and Drug Enforcement Administration to act swiftly to decontrol cannabis under the Controlled Substances Act.

<https://www.nursingworld.org/globalassets/docs/ana/comment-letters/ana-cannabis-reschedule-comments-final-2024-07-17.pdf>

caregivers to assist medicinal cannabis patients in healthcare facilities (New Jersey Compassionate Use Medical Cannabis Act [Jake Honig Act], 2019).

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