



# PATIENT RESOURCE GUIDE

Your guide to being a patient at Uplifting Health and Wellness, and resources to help you find a total wellness plan that works for you.

UPLIFTING HEALTH AND  
WELLNESS 2014

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## **Welcome to Uplifting Health and Wellness.**

Thank you for choosing us for your healthcare and alternative wellness needs.

We are honored you have entrusted your health and wellness needs to our medical professionals. We believe our patients deserve the best, so we work hard to provide an environment where patients can thrive. Uplifting Health and Wellness prides itself on providing a diverse program of knowledge, wellness activities, alternative therapies, and social responsibility. It is our pleasure to serve your healthcare needs.

We believe that patients benefit greatly by participating in an array of traditional, as well as alternative, medical services and activities. Our knowledgeable staff will assist you in developing a health and wellness program that best serves your needs. It is important for you to find the best medicine and health services for your personal situation, and we are here to help. We believe that the human body needs an array of preventive and therapeutic care to achieve complete health and wellness, and to promote healing.

Uplifting Health and Wellness provides medical consultations, educational opportunities, and community services. We work with patients to find the right combination of medicines and alternative therapies that best serve their wellness needs. Our focus is on providing a full-spectrum of alternative healing options, including medical cannabis, herbal compounding, Ayurveda, Chinese medicine, and traditional Western Herbalism.

We welcome you to Uplifting Health and Wellness. We have developed a great group of medical professionals and alternative therapy providers to assist you in your wellness journey. We offer a broad spectrum of healthcare services that can help you find a better quality of life. Our physicians are educated in traditional and alternative medical opportunities, including the emerging field of medical cannabis. We believe that patients should have access to a number of different health and healing opportunities to improve the wellness potential of their body, mind, and spirit. We look forward to serving you, and helping you find true health and wellness.

Please inform us of any areas for improvement, as we are always looking for ways improve our programs to be even greater. We want to humbly welcome you and thank you for choosing Uplifting Health and Wellness for all of your wellness needs.

Kind Regards,

The Uplifting Health and Wellness Staff

## What We Do

We are a patient-focused healthcare provider specializing in alternative therapies, including medical cannabis. We provide a convenient, affordable, discreet, and safe healthcare service for our patients. Our physicians consult with patients on their healthcare needs, and provide them with a wellness plan that can improve their quality of life through both traditional and alternative care options. In addition to medical consultations and diagnosis, we provide our patients with wellness services, support, counseling, and educational opportunities.

## Our Mission

The Mission of Uplifting Health and Wellness is to promote optimal wellness by providing traditional health care services and alternative therapy options to our patients. We provide comprehensive compassionate care, counseling, support, and education to our clients. Uplifting focuses on providing patients with a total holistic wellness program that will enable them to find health and happiness. Our top priority is patient care.

## Our Vision

Uplifting Health & Wellness focuses on the patients we serve and unique treatment plans that improve their quality of life. Medicine and therapies are merely the means by which patients achieve that objective. By creating a caring and professional environment we give our patients the best experience possible.

The Uplifting Health & Wellness team consists of professionals with an array of experience in traditional medicine and alternative therapies. Our team is comprised of professionals that have spent their careers helping people improve their health. We have brought together a diverse, talented and experienced group to manage our clinic and provide cutting edge therapeutic solutions to our patients.

Our medical practitioners are focused on giving patients a medical experience that allows them to explore both conventional and complimentary therapies. They understand that the human body requires an array of treatment and care to function properly. Optimal health is a state of balance and harmony in body, mind, and spirit and that reaching and maintaining this balance is a lifelong process.

The leadership at Uplifting understands that we are only as good as the individuals that make up our staff. We focus on proper training to ensure patient satisfaction at every level. The clinic's values are reflective of the experienced and professional nature of its leadership. Our Board of Directors will lead the organization to be a responsible and integral part of the community by creating a forum for opportunity, education, and well-being.

We enhance our patient care opportunity through involvement with other community-based organizations. We are associated with many medical, scientific, political, and patient advocacy groups committed to promoting alternative therapies, including medical cannabis. These relationships allow us to organize effectively and provide patients detailed relevant information about their medical conditions and therapies that have proven to be effective for them.

Our clinic provides written certifications for medical cannabis in conjunction with the regulations set forth by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. In order to qualify for a written certification from our physicians for medical cannabis a patient must have a qualifying debilitating medical condition. The law specifies: cancer, glaucoma, AIDS, hepatitis C, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), Crohn's disease, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis and other conditions as determined in writing by our physicians.

## Traditional Medical Care

Uplifting Health and Wellness provides traditional medical care, including physical examinations and diagnosis. Our physicians have a rich background in conventional medicine and can work with practitioners of your choice to enhance your healthcare options. We treat acute and chronic illnesses through general healthcare methods, and provide preventive care and traditional healthcare education to our patients.

Our medical staff is focused on the care of chronic health problems; the ongoing treatment of acute non-life-threatening illnesses; the referral to specialized care of patients with debilitating medical conditions; and preventative care including health education and holistic wellness activities

## Alternative Therapies

In addition to conventional medical approaches, our medical practitioners encourage the integration of alternative therapies to increase a person's wellness potential. We have continued to see positive results in our patients through methods of alternative healthcare. There is an array of alternative treatment options that can help patients feel better and maintain their health. Our medical staff encourages patients to find a healthcare plan that incorporates different types of therapies to overcome health challenges and to prevent illness and disease.

Below are some alternative health and wellness options that we encourage our patients to consider:

**Therapeutic Massage and Acupressure:** Massages relieve muscle tension and promote relaxation. This treatment can be adapted based on each patient's needs by using a combination of eclectic techniques.

**Reiki:** This is a body harmonizing technique used to restore nature's energy flow with a calm and nurturing touch.

**Deep Tissue Massage:** Intensive massage experience focused on releasing tension in deep muscle layers to relieve tension headaches and chronic muscle pain.

**Acupuncture:** This alternative therapy provides relief for many health conditions by using the ancient Chinese techniques to pinpoint various meridians or channels of the body to relieve pain.

**Reflexology:** Therapeutic foot massage that improves circulation and restores energy flow through the entire body using ancient techniques.

**Yoga/Pilates:** Patients who are able to find positive results from the tranquil exercise of yoga and the healthful practice of Pilates and stretching. A disciplined approach to physical wellbeing can be extremely beneficial for patients. Classes that teach patients to care for their bodies and be aware of its needs promote health and wellness.

**Educational Seminars and Training Courses:** A well-educated patient is a healthy patient. Uplifting Health and Wellness provides a forum to learn many different relevant topics. Education gives a person confidence and supports the healing experience.

**Counseling:** At times patients just will need to talk to someone about issues in their life. Counseling is a service that is essential to the healing process. With all of the stress and turmoil people face in life, having an outlet and forum in which to openly discuss these challenges is extremely vital part of healthy living.

**Support Groups:** It is proven that patients benefit greatly by being part of a support group to share and discuss the challenges that they may share with others in similar situations. HIV, Cancer, Gastrointestinal, and other condition-based groups allow for patients to be a part of a smaller community of patients that have the same type of issues. Together they can share ways of overcoming them. Uplifting Health and Wellness provides a space for these meetings and will give guidance if needed.

**Cannabis Medicines:** Medical cannabis has proven to be a positive medical option for a growing part of the population. Patients find relief in different kinds of cannabis medicines, such as tinctures, extractions, whole plant preparations, topical treatments, and more. We encourage patients to explore the different types of therapies and find what works best for them.

**Herbal Compounding:** Compounding refers to the process of combining various herbs in a balanced formula to treat specific conditions or issues, or to act as a whole-body holistic formulation. Patients have found positive results using compounding methods, in lieu of, or in addition to conventional medicines.

**Ayurveda:** Ayurveda is the traditional Hindu system of medicine, which is based on the idea of balance in bodily systems and uses diet, herbal treatment, and yogic breathing. The two main guiding principles of Ayurveda are that the mind and the body are inextricably connected; and that nothing has more power to heal and transform the body than the mind.

**Chinese Medicine:** Chinese medicine is a system of medicine partly based on the idea that an energy, called qi (say "chee"), flows along pathways in the body called meridians. In this belief, if the flow of qi along these meridians is blocked or unbalanced, illness can occur. Using acupuncture, herbs, and other treatment modalities, Chinese medicine works to restore harmony and energetic balance to the body which stimulates natural healing and promotes health.

**Traditional Western Herbalism:** The Practice of Traditional Western Herbalism places the function of western herbs in their true historical context, apart from homeopathy, traditional Chinese medicine, and Ayurveda. Western herbalism is based on physicians' and herbalists' clinical experience and traditional knowledge of medicinal plant remedies preserved by oral tradition and in written records over thousands of years. Western herbalism, like the much older system of traditional Chinese medicine, relies on the synergistic and curative properties of the plant to treat symptoms and disease and maintain health.

## Understanding Medical Cannabis

### How do I know if medical cannabis is right for me?

It is always best to consult with a doctor about taking any medication; cannabis is no different. Seeking out a doctor that is more familiar with the benefits of medical marijuana may help to more clearly understand if this treatment may help with your condition. While cannabis is not beneficial for everyone, it has improved the quality of life for many patients. Cannabis is not a cure for any disease or illness. What it does, like most medicines, is increases comfort levels and helps to regulate a condition so that a patient can be more productive in their daily lives. Cannabis can benefit a number of afflictions because of its ability to decrease certain kinds of pain, stimulate appetites, decrease spasms and seizures, and normalize dietary regimen.

### Is medical cannabis legal?

In November of 2012, voters in Massachusetts overwhelmingly passed Question 3: An Act for the Humanitarian Medical Use of Marijuana. The law passed with 63% of the vote making a strong statement that the people of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts truly support the rights of their friends, neighbors, and family to use cannabis as a medicine. Over the past months the State Department of Public Health has developed a complex regulatory model to oversee the emerging industry and the implementation of the Act.

Under Massachusetts's medical marijuana law, patients are permitted to legally use, possess, transport, and in some cases, cultivate marijuana for medical purposes. It allows patients to authorize up to two caregivers to access medical cannabis for them, and one caregiver can cultivate for them if they qualify for a hardship exemption. The law allows for a series of medical cannabis dispensaries to serve the needs of patients across the state under strict regulation.

### Is medical cannabis safe?

Cannabis is one of the safest medicines on the planet. It is an herbal medicine that helps people find relief where other medicines may have failed them. Cannabis is not a magical plant that can heal any condition; but if used properly it can provide extended relief for many symptoms and drastically increase one's quality of life.

### What is the Endocannabinoid System?

Endocannabinoids are substances produced naturally by your body that activate the CB1 and CB2 receptors to provide relief from discomfort or euphoria. The principal endocannabinoid is arachidonyl ethanolamide, or anandamide (AEA). This naturally occurring lipid is a fatty cannabinoid neurotransmitter found in the brains of all animals on the planet except insects. The name anandamide is derived from the Sanskrit word for bliss, ananda. Researchers are working to find the correlation between AEA and human memory, eating habits, sleep patterns, and pain relief. Studies in rats have shown that it increases the desire for food intake.

The endocannabinoid system is quite complex and its function is only beginning to be understood. Studies in humans indicate a role in regulating immunity, inflammation, neurotoxicity, blood pressure, appetite, gastrointestinal function, glaucoma, epilepsy, depression and stress. The endocannabinoid system seems to help regulate the body's biological responses to maintain health and activity by restoring balance. Truly, there is no human physiological system yet investigated that is not in some way modulated by the endocannabinoid system.

**Dr. Vincenzo Di Marzo summarized the endocannabinoid system in 1998 with the statement "Relax, eat, sleep, protect and forget."**

## Why does cannabis make you feel better?

Marijuana contains hundreds of natural chemical compounds, many of which possess psychoactive and therapeutic properties that work within your body to produce positive effects that support healing. Whether you inhale or ingest marijuana, the active ingredients in cannabis make their way to your blood stream and interact with your body to produce various effects, including relaxation, hunger, pain relief, spasm control, and numerous others.

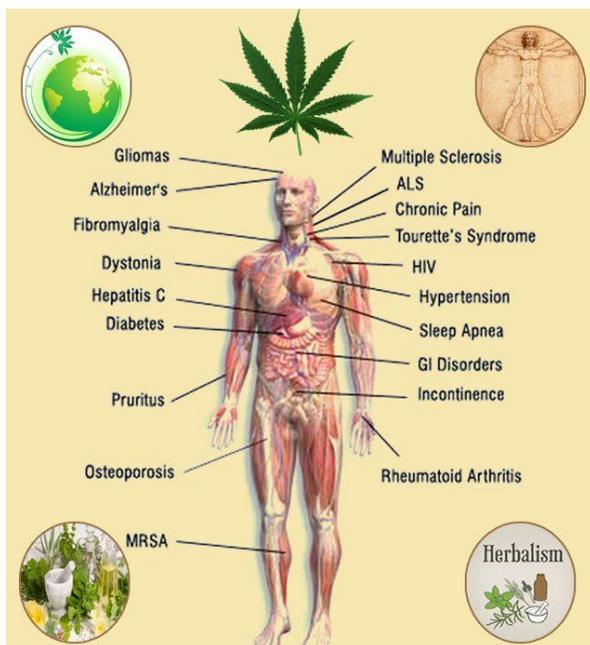
Depending on your particular condition and its symptoms, different medications may produce different results. For example, one cold medicine may work better for you than another even though they are both cold medicines. How the medicine’s chemicals affect your specific symptoms will make it useful for your condition. The chemical compounds that make cannabis an effective medication are called cannabinoids.

## What is a cannabinoid?

You’ve heard the term THC in reference to marijuana. THC is short for Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol, the most prominent psychoactive cannabinoid found in cannabis. A cannabinoid is a pharmacologically active chemical compound, and THC is one of the many different cannabinoids with widely varying degrees of medical usefulness. When you use marijuana, its constituent cannabinoids are taken in and find their way to their target—your body’s natural cannabinoid receptors. When the cannabinoid compounds bind to their receptors, physical and behavioral effects are produced. These interactions might make you feel euphoric and can affect the symptoms of your medical condition to make you function better.

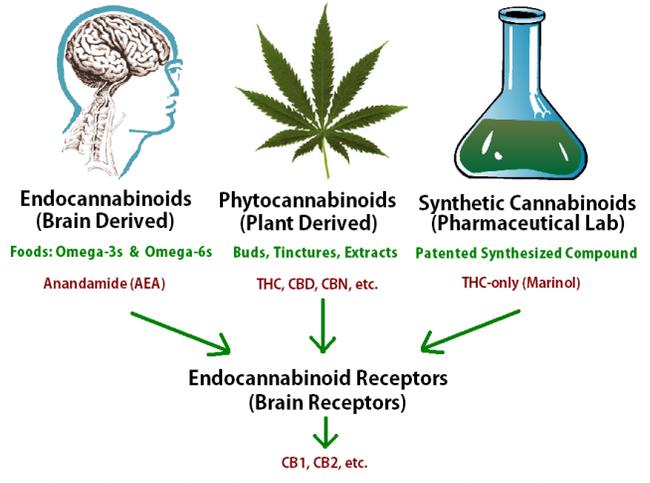
## How does your body process cannabis?

The effects of cannabis are produced by a cannabinoid receptor system in your body consisting of at least two receptor types: CB1 and CB2. CB1 receptors are found exclusively in the brain. There is a concentration of CB1 receptors in the hippocampus and cerebral cortex (see figure XX), which control memory and cognition. CB1 receptors interact with marijuana’s active compounds to produce its psychoactive effects including the euphoric, blissful state that often makes suffering more manageable.



**Potential Therapeutic Uses of Medical Marijuana**

## How Cannabis Works



The endocannabinoid system (ECS) is involved in regulating a variety of physiological processes including appetite, pain and pleasure sensation, immune system, mood, and memory.

## Health Benefits

Medical marijuana is available in several different forms. It can be smoked, ingested in a pill form or an edible version can be added to foods such as brownies, cookies and chocolate bars.

Cannabis contains about 60 active ingredients called cannabinoids (chemicals unique to marijuana). The primary psychoactive chemical in marijuana is THC, or tetrahydrocannabinol. THC offers feelings of euphoria and “floating” and has pain-relieving properties. These properties may benefit people with chronic pain, nausea from chemotherapy and the effects of progressive diseases such as glaucoma and multiple sclerosis (MS).

For example, researchers at the American Academy of Neurology found that medical marijuana in the form of pills or oral sprays appeared effective in reducing stiffness and muscle spasms in MS. The medications also eased certain symptoms of MS, such as pain related to spasms, and painful burning and numbness, as well as overactive bladder, according to the study published in the journal *Neurology*.

One of the most common uses for medical marijuana is to ease the symptoms of nausea from chemotherapy. Two FDA-approved cannabis-based drugs, dronabinol and nabilone, have been shown to reduce chemotherapy-related nausea and vomiting in cancer patients.

Medical marijuana has also been used to treat glaucoma, which is an elevated pressure in the eyeball that can lead to blindness. While smoking marijuana may reduce intraocular pressure, some debate the effectiveness of marijuana use because it must be consumed numerous times during the day to have the desired effect, which can have mood-altering implications and impact the patient’s ability to function, according to the American Cancer Society. A well-known effect of marijuana use is the “munchies,” so it has also been used to stimulate appetite among HIV/AIDS patients and others who have a suppressed appetite due to a medical condition or treatment.

Cannabidiol (CBD) is a non-psychoactive component of marijuana that has therapeutic benefits without the feeling of being stoned. For example, a 2012 study published in the journal *Translational Psychiatry* found that cannabidiol may be effective in treating schizophrenia. In the study at the University of Cologne, 42 patients randomly received either cannabidiol or amisulpride, an effective drug used for the treatment of schizophrenia, for 28 days. Comparison of the clinical effects found “no relevant difference” between the two treatments.

## Health Risks

Marijuana does have side effects. THC binds to cannabinoid receptors, which are concentrated in areas of the brain associated with thinking, memory, pleasure, coordination and time perception. The effects of marijuana can interfere with attention, judgment and balance.

Marijuana also suppresses the immune system, which can be damaging to many people, but useful for others with certain health conditions. Although marijuana has been known to decrease pressure within the eyes, a symptom of the condition glaucoma, research has shown that other drugs may be more effective. Studies have produced conflicting results on whether smoking marijuana carries a significant cancer risk. According to the American Cancer Society, worldwide research into the benefits and side effects of compounds in marijuana is ongoing.

The FDA has not approved marijuana in its plant form as a treatment. During a 2004 congressional testimony, a doctor speaking on behalf of the FDA said marijuana as a “botanical product” is difficult to test for efficacy and safety because the proportions of active chemicals can range greatly from plant to plant. This, he said, can also cause problems for patients trying to use marijuana. But he added that the FDA “will be receptive to sound, scientifically based research into the medicinal uses of botanical marijuana and other cannabinoids.”

Courtesy of Live Science: <http://www.livescience.com/>

## Patient Conditions for Which Cannabis Medicines May Be Beneficial

*To become a patient in Massachusetts you must have a “debilitating medical condition.” The Department of Public Health defines this as meaning: **Cancer, glaucoma, positive status for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), hepatitis C, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), Crohn’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, and multiple sclerosis (MS), when such diseases are debilitating, and other debilitating conditions as determined in writing by a qualifying patient’s certifying physician.** The Department defines “debilitating” as follows: **Debilitating means causing weakness, cachexia, wasting syndrome, intractable pain, or nausea, or impairing strength or ability, and progressing to such an extent that one or more of a patient’s major life activities is substantially limited.** The following are some conditions for which cannabis has proven to provide relief:*

**Cancer and Chemotherapy Treatment:** Cannabis is most effective to combat the side effects of the treatments used to fight cancer. Most notably are its extremely effective in curbing nausea and increasing the appetite of patients experiencing the harsh side effects of chemotherapy and radiation. It also can reduce the pain associated with the disease.

**HIV/AIDS:** HIV/AIDS patients often experience wasting syndrome from the disease and the multitudes of medicines used to combat the disease. Cannabis stimulates their appetite allowing them to eat more regularly and avoid the common traits associated with wasting syndrome, as well as helps ease the pains associated with the disease itself.

**Pain Afflictions:** Research shows that cannabis is a safe and effective treatment for a variety of pain related afflictions, including deep tissue pains, muscle and back pain, and neuropathic or shooting pains. Cannabis does not have the dangerous side effects of other opiate-based painkillers and is not known to be toxic at any level of ingestion, making it a much safer medicine for pain.

**Multiple Sclerosis:** Cannabis improves spasticity and improves tremors in MS patients. It helps control involuntary muscle contraction, balance, bladder control, speech, and eyesight in these patients. Cannabis helps with the immune system, which is thought to be the underlying pathogenic process in MS patients.

**Gastrointestinal Disorders:** Cannabis has value as an anti-emetic and analgesic medication. It helps combat the symptoms brought on by disorders such as Crohn’s Disease, Irritable Bowel Syndrome, and Ulcerative Colitis. Cannabis interacts with the endogenous cannabinoid receptors in the digestive tract, which can result in calming spasms, assuaging pain, and improving motility. Cannabis has also been shown to have anti-inflammatory properties and recent research has demonstrated that cannabinoids are immune system modulators.

**Movement Disorders:** Cannabis is effective in treating muscular spasticity, a common condition, affecting millions of people. This condition afflicts individuals who have suffered strokes, as well as those with multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, paraplegia, quadriplegia, and spinal cord injuries. Conventional medical therapy offers little to address spasticity problems. Because cannabinoids have antispasmodic, analgesic, anticonvulsant, and anti-ataxia properties, cannabis is extremely effective in treating these disorders.

**Aging:** Cannabis has been found to help many patients suffering from conditions that afflict older patients, including arthritis, chronic pain, cancer, Alzheimer’s disease, diabetes, and spasticity associated with such diseases as Parkinson’s.

**Arthritis:** There are two common types of arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis, but both affect the joints, causing pain and swelling, and limiting movement. The analgesic properties of cannabis make it useful in treating the pain associated with arthritis, both on its own and as an adjunct therapy that enhances the efficacy of opioid painkillers. Cannabis has also been shown to have powerful immune-modulation and anti-inflammatory properties suggesting that it could play a role in treating arthritis, and not just in symptom management.

## Using Medical Cannabis Sensibly and Safely

*The following are principles every patient should follow to encourage safe and responsible use of medical cannabis:*

- Cannabis is a medicine and is not for everyone. Like with any medicine, proper precaution must be taken.
- Never allow non-patients, especially young people, to have access to your medicine for any reason. Medicine should be locked away in a safe place away from common areas if not being directly supervised by the patient or caregiver. It is unacceptable to leave medicine unattended and susceptible to misuse.
- Never use your medicine if you are planning on driving or are in a situation where your impairment could cause harm to another person or property. Always be aware of your surrounding and ensure proper dosage before performing activities requiring a high level of concentration.
- Learn to titrate and regulate your dosage appropriately. Many patients have found better medicinal effects by using less medicine. Begin by taking in just a small amount of medicine and give it time to take effect (15-30 minutes depending on method of ingestion). Then making a calculated assessment on whether you need to increase your dosage based on how well your symptoms are managed.
- Medical cannabis should be a positive in your life. Always strive to have a productive and responsible experience.
- Do not let cannabis interfere with your daily activities or your responsibilities at home, work, or in the community.
- Be educated about medical cannabis and what it means for your condition. It is important to be an informed and active part of your own healing experience.
- Be a positive cannabis role model and use your knowledge and experience to counsel and educate less informed users.
- Never ever divert medicine obtained for your personal medical use to other non-patients. Any diversion of medical cannabis products is illegal.
- Always be cautious and never obtain medicine from or provide medicine to people you do not know to be qualified patients under any circumstance.
- The freedom to use medical cannabis hinges on patients and providers ability to maintain an ethical and compassionate environment. Never let your activity as a patient or producer of medicine hinder the progress of the entire movement.
- **Do not abuse the privilege of medical cannabis.** Be respectful of the norms and laws of the community you live in. Realize there are still many in the community that lack understanding of medical cannabis. Use discretion in the way that you interact with the community and never let your involvement with medical cannabis or Uplifting Health and Wellness result in people being concerned or upset. Take a low-key approach and never let your use of medical cannabis be a distraction.

## Methods of Medicating

*The information below is from Americans for Safe Access ([www.americansforsafeaccess.org](http://www.americansforsafeaccess.org))*

### Smoking

Smoking marijuana produces the most immediate effects and permits the most refined control of your dosage. Smoking any material is not good for the lungs, but the amount of marijuana you need to smoke is so small that you need not be overly concerned. It is better to smoke the flowers rather than the leaves as this also reduces the amount you will need to smoke.

### Vaporizing

Cannabis vaporizers are designed to let users inhale active cannabinoids while avoiding harmful smoke toxins. They do so by heating cannabis to a temperature that is just below the point of combustion where smoke is produced. At this point, THC and other medically active cannabinoids are emitted with little or none of the carcinogenic tars and noxious gases found in smoke. Many medical marijuana patients who find smoked marijuana highly irritating report effective relief inhaling through vaporizers. Also, vaporizers are very efficient so they can save money in the long term.

### Eating

Marijuana can be eaten. When consumed this way, it is usually baked in brownies or cookies, and sometimes made into a candy. It takes longer to feel the effects when eaten, and may take longer for you to learn to control your dosage. However, when you do feel the effects, they may be stronger than those felt by smoking. You may also feel certain heaviness in your body. This will not hurt you. Schedule your time so that you can relax when you take it.

### Tea

Like other herbs, marijuana may be made into a tea. Boil the water first and pour it over the marijuana. Let it steep for longer than you would for common black tea; approximately an hour and a half. Add 1 teaspoon of butter. The effects are similar to eating it.

### Tincture

To prepare a tincture, use 5 parts fresh marijuana to 1 part vodka. If you are using dried marijuana, as is usually the case, use 10 parts marijuana to 1 part vodka. An easy way to do this if you don't have measuring equipment, is to fill whatever container you are using (glass is preferable as you don't want to leech any residues from metal containers) to thirds full with marijuana, then fill the container with vodka and let stand for a week or more. Afterward, strain the solution. If you use a larger portion of marijuana, the resulting tincture will be more potent.

### Compress

Follow the recipe as for tea. Make as much as you need to thoroughly soak the cloth you intend to use. Apply to pain and leave on ½ hour.

## Varieties of Medicine

*The following are different types of medical cannabis options. Different patients find better results with different varieties and strengths of medicines. Understanding what the differences are can help you make a better decision as to what might work best for you.*

**Whole Plant Medicines and Flowers:** Dried flowering clusters and leafy material of the cannabis plant. Raw plant material is used as the basis for all other cannabis medicines. The flowers can be smoked, vaporized, extracted, or infused into tinctures and food-based medicines.

**Extractions:** Cannabis can be extracted by a number of different processes resulting in a resinous substance that is more concentrated in nature and requires less consumption by a patient. Commonly referred to as “hash,” these types of medicine can be smoked, vaporized, or infused into other products. Extractions allow patients to regulate dosage more easily. There are several different methods for extraction to consider, including water extraction and super-critical solvent extraction. Extractions are powerful and should be used with caution by patients to ensure one does not become over-medicated.

**Kief or Dry Sift Resin Glands:** By sifting dried plant matter over a screen of some sort or in a tumbling device, the loose resin gland of the cannabis will be detached from the plant, resulting in what is known as kief. The dry, granular substance is effective for patients to use when smoking, or by adding it to other types of preparations.

**Food-Based Medicines:** Some patients must eat their medicine and the healing properties of cannabis are best bonded to fats and glucose preparations. Butters, oils, and simple syrups are used to infuse with the cannabis medicines, and these preparations are normally added to foods, such as baked goods and candies. The food helps mask the taste of the medicine. These functional foods are all prepared by patient kitchens by members who are trained in the safe handling of foods. They are all discreetly packaged and clearly labeled to ensure safety.

**Tinctures:** Tinctures are liquid preparations in which the cannabis plant material is infused into a substance like alcohol or glycerin for a period of time. It is then strained and bottled for patient use, normally in a dropper container to control dosage. These tinctures are great for patients to add to beverages and produce a more rapid onset.

**Topical Preparations:** Cannabis can be infused into a number of ointments and lotions that may help with conditions, such as eczema or dry skin. Topical medicines do not normally create a psychoactive effect, but some patients find applying them to areas of tissue pain to be helpful.

## Massachusetts Medical Marijuana Regulations

In November of 2012, voters in Massachusetts overwhelmingly passed Question 3: An Act for the Humanitarian Medical Use of Marijuana. The law passed with 63% of the vote making a strong statement that the people of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts truly support the rights of their friends, neighbors, and family to use cannabis as a medicine. Over the past months the State Department of Public Health has developed a complex framework to regulate the emerging industry and guide the implementation of the Act.

While the medical cannabis industry in Massachusetts is just beginning, there are a lot of lessons we can learn from our friends across the nation who have traveled down this road before us. There is no mistaking that Massachusetts has put forth some of the most detailed regulations in the country, making it of the utmost importance to really understand what they mean for you, your business, and for the community at large.

The reality is that cannabis is evolving daily, and we must embrace and encourage this evolution. There is an exciting industry being developed, but there is still a lot of opposition to overcome based on decades of misinformation about this wonderful plant, and its many uses. This is an industry where just by being a part of it you have automatically signed up to be an activist for this cause.

### What do the regulations mean for me as a patient?

First and foremost they mean you have access to your medicine without fear of arrest or prosecution. That is awesome. Be aware the program is set up to be more stringent than in some other states, which means there are extra hurdles for patients and physicians to clear in order to meet the definition of a “bona-fide physician-patient relationship.” This definition is one of many measures in the program intended to prevent abuse of the system, and is the likely product of the perception that rules concerning the physician-patient relationship in other states have been lax. . Despite such controls, regulations also allow room for patients and physicians to make the right choice for their health. The bottom line is more paperwork for everyone involved. In other states we have seen a loosening of these restrictions to allow for more patients to be involved with the program through an expansion of rights.

### The Registration Process

To become a patient in Massachusetts you must have a “debilitating medical condition.” The Department of Public health defines this as meaning:

*Cancer, glaucoma, positive status for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), hepatitis C, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), Crohn’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, and multiple sclerosis (MS), when such diseases are debilitating, **and other debilitating conditions as determined in writing by a qualifying patient’s certifying physician.***

The last sentence is important because it allows practitioners to make educated decisions on their patients’ health. The Department defines “debilitating” as follows:

*Debilitating means causing weakness, cachexia, wasting syndrome, intractable pain, or nausea, or **impairing strength or ability**, and progressing to such an extent that **one or more of a patient’s major life activities is substantially limited.***

While those definitions are clearly aimed at limiting who can, and cannot, be a part of the program the reality is that almost any condition can impair a person’s strength and ability, and limit activities. That is what medical conditions do to people. They debilitate them. So the law clearly allows for a physician to make the call if your

condition is debilitating to you, and if cannabis will help. That is good news. Attempting to limit people who find relief from cannabis by arbitrarily defining who is, and is not, sick enough to use a safe and non-toxic whole plant medicine is absurd. It is hopeful that medical practitioners will defend their right to do what is best for their patients in regards to using cannabis.

In the definition of “bona-fide physician patient relationship” the regulations state that the physician must be “acting in the usual course of his professional practice.” What this means is that a doctor who is a psychologist cannot begin pumping out recommendations for patients with chronic pain, or movement disorders. Does this mean there are not doctors specializing in cannabis? No. But they will have to only see patients that fall under their area of expertise or specialization.

As a patient, you must define your condition and be prepared to explain how it is debilitating for you in the context outlined in the definition of “debilitating” listed above.

So now you have made the choice to use medical cannabis and to become a “Registered Qualified Patient” under the state program to be afforded the protections of the Act, and to participate in the dispensing or hardship cultivation aspects of the program. What does that look like?

- First you must locate a physician that, “in his usual course of professional practice” is willing to certify that “the potential benefits of the medical use of marijuana would likely outweigh the health risks” for you personally. Many local advocacy organizations keep a list of practitioners who are open to the use of medical cannabis and are willing to certify patients. Also, physicians who have been cleared to certify cannabis patients advertise their services.
- Physicians are required to complete and document “a full assessment of the patient’s medical history,” and so you should be prepared to show the physician any medical records you have that verify your condition. In order to meet the definition of “bona-fide relationship” the physician must conduct a clinical visit, complete and document a full assessment of the patient’s current medical condition, explain the potential benefits and risks of marijuana use, and **must have a role in the ongoing care and treatment of the patient**. This means the physician has to have the ability to offer follow up care to the patient, including examinations to determine the efficacy of medical cannabis on your condition. This is the **same type of relationship required under Colorado law and it seems** to be working fine for patients there.
- The doctor is required to check the Massachusetts Prescription Monitoring System to ensure you are not using other medications that may conflict with cannabis use, or if there is an abuse issue to worry about.

Agreed the regulations say that about the prescription monitoring program, but not sure exactly how this is going to work at this point because I don’t think the PMP itself is up and running yet.

- The physician must designate a time period for how long the certification is valid. That means a doctor can choose to only allow you to use cannabis for a short time, or that they can authorize you for up to a year. You are allowed 10 ounces of cannabis every 60 days unless your physician decides you need more or less. Some patients may need more for high-dose treatments, or because they consume it through a method that takes a lot of material to produce, such as foods.
- If the patient is under 18 they must have two physicians certify them, and one must be a pediatrician.
- After receiving written certification from your doctor you are required to register with the state. The Department has determined an application and/or system for registering. You are required to submit your personal information (address, phone, etc.), your written certification, your doctor’s contact information, whether you are applying for a hardship cultivation registration, copy of an official ID, and

acknowledgment statement on program limits, a statement that you will not divert your medicine and that it is only legal in Mass, as well as pay a \$50 annual fee.

- Your registration is valid for one year, as long as your written certification is also for one year. Once your certification is expired so is your registration card, unless your physician renews you.
- If you applied while the program was being developed, and used your written certification as your initial registration card you have to apply for an official card when the online registration system becomes operational.
- If any of the information you submitted to the Department changes, you have 5 days to notify them. So if you move, you have to let them know. You also have to let them know if your card was lost or stolen within 5 days.
- DPH has the right to deny, or revoke, your registration card for a number of reasons, including failure to provide info, misleading or false info, failure to meet requirements, you were already denied/revoked in the last 6 months, failure to pay fees, violation of the Act or regulations, fraudulent use of your card, selling or distributing your medicine to others, tampering or falsifying your card, failure to notify within 5 days of a change or lost/stolen card, or you put others at risk by using cannabis.
- You will receive written notice of your denial/revocation and have 21 days from the date on the notice to request a hearing. The Division of Administrative Law Appeals will conduct the hearing. You have the right to have the hearing reviewed by the Superior Court if necessary.

### **How can I be approved for a Hardship Cultivation Registration?**

In order to apply for a hardship cultivation registration the patient must demonstrate that they cannot get to, or afford to go to, a registered dispensary. Here are the limitations one must have to qualify for hardship cultivation:

- If you are financially limited, meaning you are receiving MassHealth benefits, Supplemental Security Income, and/or your income doesn't exceed 3x the poverty level, or \$34,470 for a single person/\$70,650 for a family of four.
- You are physically incapable of accessing reasonable transportation. This means you have to have no ability to drive, no access to public transit, no caregiver who can drive, and no dispensary that will deliver to you. You don't live near a dispensary and no dispensary will deliver to you. What is a "reasonable distance" is anyone's guess but 25 miles has been used in other programs. Because of this it is likely the state will work to spread the dispensaries out to cover the most real estate.

In order to obtain a Hardship Cultivation Registration, you have to apply in a form or system similar to that for a patient registration; but you also have to include information on where and how the cannabis is being cultivated. You have to submit evidence that you meet the requirements above and have limited ability or access to a dispensary. You have to inform them of how you plan on securing the grow site and prevent diversion of the plants. Cultivation must happen in an enclosed locked area, and may not be visible from the street or public areas.

You have to submit the address where the cannabis is being grown, and that site may be inspected at any time. By accepting a hardship registration you automatically consent to search of your property.

### **What do the regulations mean for me as a caregiver?**

A personal caregiver is defined by the Department as follows:

*Personal Caregiver means a person, **registered** by the Department, who is **at least 21 years old**, who has **agreed to assist** with a registered qualifying patient's medical use of marijuana, and is **not the registered qualifying patient's certifying physician**. An employee of a hospice provider, nursing, or medical facility or*

*a visiting nurse, personal care attendant, or home health aide providing care to a qualifying patient **may serve as a personal caregiver, including to patients under 18 years of age as a second caregiver.***

In order to register as a caregiver with the Department a person must submit an application similar to that of the qualifying patient they are caring for which includes personal information (address, phone, etc.) and a statement that you are at least 21 years old. You need to also provide the same information for the qualifying patient that you care for. You have to give them a copy of your identification documents. The caregiver must state if they are going to cultivate, and where if the patient is applying for a hardship registration. A written statement acknowledging your limitations, as well as an attestation that you will not divert the medicine is also required.

A caregiver must be granted a card before they can begin caregiving legally. If you registered before the program was in place, you have to register for an official card. **You are not allowed to get paid for your work beyond your costs incurred, and your time and effort is not considered a valid cost. You can only be a caregiver for one qualifying patient,** but one patient can have two caregivers to assist them. If there are two caregivers, they can only cultivate at one location. Your registration is valid for one year, or until the qualifying patient's certification expires, unless it is being renewed. You also must submit any changes in information submitted, or if your card is lost or stolen within 5 days.

If you are a registered caregiver your responsibilities ARE:

- Transporting your patient to and from the dispensary
- Obtaining and transporting medical cannabis from a dispensary for your patient
- Cultivating cannabis for your patient IF they have a hardship cultivation registration
- Preparing the cannabis for the patient. This also includes cooking and extracting the medicine
- Helping your patient use the cannabis

A registered caregiver MAY NOT:

- Use cannabis that was dispensed to, or grown for, the qualified patient
- Sell, give away, or in any way provide the patient's medical cannabis to anyone but the patient
- Grow cannabis for themselves, unless they too are a qualified patient with a hardship registration.
- Grow cannabis to sell or give to anyone but the registered qualifying patient
- Allow a patient under 18 to possess cannabis not in their presence

If your role as a caregiver is as an employee of a hospice provider, nursing, or medical facility or a visiting nurse, personal care attendant, or home health aide providing care you cannot cultivate cannabis on behalf of the patient.

## Informational Resources

*Uplifting Health and Wellness does its best to provide the most complete information for our patients, but there are many other great informational resources that we encourage our members to become familiar with. Below are a list of great medical cannabis information organizations and their online addresses:*

**Massachusetts Department of Public Health:** [www.mass.gov/medicalmarijuana](http://www.mass.gov/medicalmarijuana)

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health is the regulatory agency for the Medical Use of Marijuana Program. They have the latest regulations and policies governing cannabis on their site that all patients should know and understand.

**Massachusetts Patient Advocacy Alliance:** [www.compassionforpatients.com](http://www.compassionforpatients.com)

Massachusetts Patient Advocacy Alliance works with medical marijuana patients, their family members, medical professionals, and other public health groups to support safe access to medical marijuana for patients who have a doctor's recommendation.

**MassCann/NORML:** [www.masscann.org](http://www.masscann.org)

MassCann/NORML is a non-profit, membership organization dedicated to reforming Massachusetts's marijuana laws. Their mission is to establish the right of adults to use cannabis legally. They maintain a separate membership and financial base from national NORML.

**Marijuana Policy Project:** [www.mpp.org](http://www.mpp.org)

A national organization working on ending cannabis prohibition. MPP and MPP Foundation envision a nation where marijuana is legally regulated similarly to alcohol, marijuana education is honest and realistic, and treatment for problem marijuana users is non-coercive and geared toward reducing harm

**Patients Out of Time:** [www.medicalcannabis.com](http://www.medicalcannabis.com)

The organization known as Patients Out of Time is a non-profit 501c4 corporation of the Commonwealth of Virginia that shall lobby and educate all disciplines of health care professionals; their specialty and professional organizations; and the public at large about medical cannabis (marijuana).

**Students for Sensible Drug Policy:** [www.ssdp.org](http://www.ssdp.org)

Students for Sensible Drug Policy are an international grassroots network of students who are concerned about the impact drug abuse has on our communities, but who also know that the War on Drugs is failing our generation and our society. SSDP mobilizes and empowers young people to participate in the political process, pushing for sensible policies to achieve a safer and more just future, while fighting back against counterproductive Drug War policies, particularly those that directly harm students and youth.

**Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies:** [www.maps.org](http://www.maps.org)

Our mission is to develop psychedelics and marijuana into legal prescription medicines for therapeutic applications. We are actively developing and funding clinical trials with human subjects in accordance with guidelines set forth by the United States' Food and Drug Administration, the European Medicines Agency, and the International Council on Harmonization (ICH/GCP).

**Americans for Safe Access:** [www.americansforsafeaccess.org](http://www.americansforsafeaccess.org)

Medical Cannabis Advocacy organization dedicated to expanding access to cannabis medicines and ending the prohibition of safe and effective medicine. ASA has had innumerable successes in moving forward positive legislation to protect patient rights on local, state, and national levels.

## **Patients' Rights**

*You have rights as a patient. The following are rights you must consider when accessing medical services, alternative therapies, and providers of medicine. If you feel these rights are being violated you should seek care elsewhere and notify the proper authorities of how your rights were infringed.*

**Choice of Providers:** You have the right to accurate and easily understood information about the laws and local regulations. You have the right to have your medicine and therapies provided elsewhere if needed.

**Accuracy, Quality, and Control:** You have the right to accurately labeled and weighed quality medication and accurate information about the medication being provided. Quality control staff should thoroughly inspect all medicines before it is dispensed to you.

**Safety:** You have the right to obtain your care in a safe and friendly environment. You have the right to safe and effective therapies and medicines in appropriate and sanitary conditions.

**Respect and Non-Discrimination:** You have the right to considerate, respectful, and non-discriminatory care.

**Confidentiality of Health Information:** You have the right to talk in confidence with your providers and to have your health care information protected under all appropriate safety provisions. Our staff is discreet and will never release information about you to anyone not authorized by you.