Position Statement
Cannabis in the Workplace

Alberta Health Services (AHS) strongly supports restrictions and limitations for cannabis on all AHS property and workplace settings as part of our overall approach to protecting patients, visitors and AHS Representatives (which include all AHS employees, medical staff, residents, nurse practitioners, midwives, students, volunteers and contractors).

As of October 17, 2018 the federal *Cannabis Act* allows adults in Canada to legally use, consume, purchase, and possess non-medical cannabis. More information regarding the *Cannabis Act* is available here.

AHS recognizes that the use and consumption of cannabis on AHS property and AHS workplace settings can place the integrity, safety, and well-being of patients, AHS Representatives, others, and AHS business at risk.

The use of **non-medical cannabis** is prohibited on all AHS property, and in all AHS workplace settings. This applies to all individuals on AHS property and workplace settings, not just AHS Representatives.

AHS Representatives who choose to use cannabis outside of work must ensure it does not impact their ability to be fit for work.

Off-duty use of cannabis by AHS Representatives

AHS Representatives are expected to work safely at all times and ensure that they do not endanger the health, safety or well-being of others. As a result, the use or consumption of all non-medical cannabis at work is prohibited by AHS Representatives. AHS Representatives who choose to use cannabis outside of work must ensure it does not impact their ability to be fit for work.

Research has demonstrated that cannabis can impact individuals for over 24 hours after use. More information about how cannabis can impact your ability to work safely can be found in a recently released Position Statement from the *Occupational and Environmental Medical Association of Canada:*

> *"The duration of impairment [from cannabis] may exist for 24 hours or longer after use, and the user may be unaware of the impairing effects . . . until definitive evidence is available, it is not advisable to operate motor vehicles or equipment, or engage in other safety-sensitive tasks for 24 hours following cannabis consumption, or for longer if impairment persists."*

Being fit for work

At AHS, **fit for work** means being able to work safely and perform assigned duties without any limitations due to the use or after-effects of alcohol, illegal drugs, medications or other substances. All AHS Representatives shall hold themselves accountable for their own actions by keeping the safety of our patients and families at the forefront of our work and not impacting AHS business through the use of alcohol and/or drugs.

This approach is consistent with the AHS Bylaws & Code of Conduct and AHS Values, as well as standards of practice for all regulated health professions. Several health professions provide guidance regarding fitness for work and impairment. More information is available on their websites.

AHS Representatives who use cannabis for medical purposes are still expected to be fit for work

Cannabis for medical purposes

Cannabis for medical purposes has been legal in Canada since 2001. On October 17, 2018 specific provisions relating to cannabis for medical purposes will remain under the regulations of the *Cannabis Act*.

AHS Representatives who have been authorized to use cannabis for medical purposes should speak to their Manager or Abilities Management to help determine if their use of cannabis for medical purposes requires an accommodation in the workplace. Use of cannabis for medical purposes by patients, visitors and AHS Representatives also needs to comply with AHS' Tobacco and Smoke Free Environments Policy that prohibits the consumption of tobacco and tobacco-like products (including but not limited to e-cigarettes, other electronic smoking/vaping products, cannabis, etc.) on AHS property and settings.

Patient use of cannabis for medical purposes is addressed in the Accommodating Patients' Use of cannabis for Medical Purposes policy, which was recently approved and will be implemented shortly.

Where can I find reliable information and research about cannabis?

Information about cannabis health effects, research and resources are available on Insite.

What if I have more questions?

If you have questions or require additional information, please refer to Frequently Asked Questions: Use of Cannabis by Alberta Health Services Representatives, contact your Manager or email cannabis@ahs.ca.