

July 1, 2015

Policy for Medical Cannabis Use at Children's Frequently Asked Questions

Why are we discussing this?

As of July 1, 2015, some Minnesotans will be able to legally use medical cannabis to alleviate suffering from certain qualifying conditions. Patients must have one of a specific list of conditions in order to qualify for medical cannabis use. In addition they must go through a process to be approved and be registered for use of medical cannabis with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).

Children or adult patients who are approved for medical cannabis use by the MDH may be admitted to Children's. Children's will permit the use of medical cannabis in the hospitals as a continuation of self-directed therapy in a manner consistent with Minnesota laws and regulations.

The use of medical cannabis will not be permitted in clinics, infusion settings or other outpatient settings.

What is critical for everyone to know?

- Children's staff, including nurses and pharmacists, will **not** be involved in the dispensing or administration of medical cannabis.
- There must be a Provider order for an adult patient or parent/legal guardian to self-administer medical cannabis.
- Nurses and pharmacists will be involved in verifying that a patient is in fact approved and registered with the MDH for medical cannabis use, and that the medical cannabis container presented by the family is labeled appropriately and in a child-proof container.
- A safe will be provided for the storage of medical cannabis in the patient room. Security will assist the adult patient or parent/legal guardian to select a combination. The combination should not be shared with staff or other family members.
- Children's employees are not to access the safe or handle medical cannabis at any time.

- If medical cannabis is found outside the safe, staff should ask the adult patient, parent/legal guardian, and/or designated caregiver to return it to the safe immediately and fill out a safety learning report (SLR).
- Should **any** employee find medical cannabis unattended in any location, including a patient room, they should contact security immediately.
- In the short term, some documentation will be on paper forms and scanned in the medical record. EMR documentation is forthcoming.

What forms of medical cannabis are allowed according to Children’s policy?

Medical cannabis must be in liquid/oil or capsule form in order to be used at Children’s. These products must come from a facility approved to dispense medical cannabis. Dried leaves, plants or edibles are not allowed under Minnesota law. Cannabis products from other states will not be allowed.

For Nurses, Pharmacists and Security Staff:

How will I know a patient being admitted is approved for self-administration of medical cannabis?

The decision will be made by the admitting provider and documented in the history and physical, along with the qualifying condition. The provider will verify the patient’s verification status and document this in the medical record. An order authorizing the continued use of self-directed therapy will be written.

As medical cannabis is not defined as a medication in the Minnesota statute, it will not be included in the medication reconciliation process or documented on the EMAR.

What do I do as a nurse if a patient is admitted with an order for the self-administration of medical cannabis?

Nurses will need to see MDH verification of acceptance into the program, photo identification, and the medical cannabis container. Please refer to policy #138, Use of Medical Cannabis at Children’s Hospitals and Clinics of MN for specific steps and documentation requirements.

Nurses will provide the adult patient, parent/legal guardian and/or designated caregiver with Children’s specific education material explaining hospital guidelines for self-administration.

Nurses will also provide an acknowledgement for signature by the patient, parent/legal guardian, and/or designated caregiver. When the acknowledgement is signed, notify the pharmacist to inspect the medical cannabis container.

Failure to sign the acknowledgement will mean that the patient/family cannot use, possess or secure the medical cannabis during the hospitalization. Medical cannabis will need to be removed from the hospital immediately. Security should be contacted as needed to facilitate the removal process.

What do I do as a pharmacist if a patient is admitted with an order for the self-administration of medical cannabis?

When notified by the RN that the patient, parent/legal guardian, and/or designated caregiver have signed the acknowledgement, the pharmacist will go to the patient's room to inspect the medical cannabis container, label and contents. Refer to policy #138 Use of Medical Cannabis at Children's Hospitals and Clinics of MN for specific elements to inspect, verify and document. If the required elements are met, the pharmacist will attach the appropriate pharmacy label specific to medical cannabis.

See policy #138 for conditions that require the removal of the medical cannabis.

When inspections are complete, then what?

- Medical cannabis will be stored in a locked safe in the patient room. Some rooms in the epilepsy monitoring unit (EMU) will have safes installed. In other locations, a portable safe will be brought to the room and secured.
- The nurse and pharmacist should coordinate the notification of security to bring the safe and help the family set up a personal, confidential combination.

What do I do as a security officer if a patient is admitted with an order for the self-administration of medical cannabis?

- Security will bring a safe to the patient room if a safe is not already present.
- Security will come to the room and instruct the adult patient, parent/legal guardian, and/or designated caregiver on how to select a confidential combination for the safe.
- Non-essential staff, family members or visitors should **not** be in the room when security instructs the family and the personal, confidential combination is selected. Staff should not have knowledge of the combination.
- Once the combination is established, the adult patient, parent/legal guardian, and/or designated caregiver should place the medical cannabis container in the safe and lock it.
- Security will be responsible to facilitate the removal of medical cannabis at any time it is required.

Who administers the medical cannabis?

The adult patient, parent/legal guardian, and/or designated caregiver is responsible for the administration of medical cannabis. If they are not present to administer, the medical cannabis will not be given. Medical cannabis must be administered in the patient room and is not allowed outside of the patient's room.

Children's staff should not retrieve or return the medical cannabis to the safe, even if requested.

Nurses will document if they observe the administration of the medical cannabis on a paper record until a location in the EMR is built. If the nurse is not present the family should notify the nurse that medical cannabis has been administered. The nurse will document that the administration is confirmed by others on a paper record until a location in the EMR is built.

What are the potential side effects of medical cannabis?

- Stimulating and depressing CNS effects:
 - Affect (euphoria and laughter)
 - Sensory (perception and disorientation)
 - Somatic (drowsiness and dizziness)
 - Cognitive (confusion, difficulty concentrating)

Can also cause:

Tachycardia, hypotension, bronchodilation, muscle relaxation, decreased gastrointestinal motility