Medical Marijuana and the Federal VA Health Care System

The path forward
Veterans find relief from symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress through the use of Cannabis. Many Veterans also find Cannabis to be an effective treatment option for chronic pain management.

$20 OMMP Card fee for ALL Oregon Veterans
VHA DIRECTIVE 2011-004 (Expired 1.31.2016)

ACCESS TO CLINICAL PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS PARTICIPATING IN STATE APPROVED MARIJUANA PROGRAMS

VHA policy **does not** administratively prohibit Veterans who participate in State marijuana programs from also participating in VHA substance abuse programs, pain control programs, or other clinical programs where the use of marijuana may be considered inconsistent with treatment goals.

While patients participating in State marijuana programs must not be denied VHA services, the decisions to modify treatment plans in those situations need to be made by individual providers in partnership with their patients. VHA endorses a step-care model for the treatment of patients with chronic pain: any prescription(s) for chronic pain needs be managed under the auspices of such programs described in current VHA policy regarding Pain Management.

POLICY: It is VHA policy to prohibit VA providers from completing forms seeking recommendations or opinions regarding a Veteran’s participation in a State marijuana program.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prohibited Practice</th>
<th>Permissible Practice</th>
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<tr>
<td>Completing forms seeking recommendations or opinions regarding a veteran’s participation in state medical marijuana programs.</td>
<td>Veterans may complete a release of information to obtain copies of their personal medical records.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patients participating in state marijuana programs must not be denied VHA services.</td>
<td>Individual providers may make decisions to modify treatment plans in partnership with their patients.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veterans who participate in state marijuana programs cannot be prohibited from participating in VHA substance abuse programs or pain control programs or other clinical programs where the use of marijuana may be considered inconsistent with treatment goals.</td>
<td>Chronic pain must be treated in accordance with the VHA step-care model, and any prescriptions for chronic pain must be in accordance with VHA Pain Management Strategy.</td>
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<td>VA practitioners will not pay for or provide marijuana authorized by a non-VA entity.</td>
<td>Clinical staff will enter information regarding patient participation in state marijuana programs in the non-VA medication section of the patient’s electronic medical record.</td>
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H.R. 667 - Veterans Equal Access Act

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.
This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Equal Access Act”.

SEC. 2. PROVISION BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND OPINIONS REGARDING VETERAN PARTICIPATION IN STATE MARIJUANA PROGRAMS.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall authorize physicians and other health care providers employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs to—

(1) provide recommendations and opinions to veterans who are residents of States with State marijuana programs regarding the participation of veterans in such State marijuana programs; and

(2) complete forms reflecting such recommendations and opinions.

Adopted 233 yeas – 189 no