

# SPEAKING TO YOUR PATIENTS ABOUT MEDICAL CANNABIS



A 2023 survey of medical cannabis patients from the Maryland Cannabis Administration (MCA) found:

1 in 4 patients are not comfortable discussing medical cannabis with their healthcare provider.

Patients selected “educating healthcare providers” about cannabis as a top desired public education priority.

Patients report perceived stigma is the highest when discussing cannabis with healthcare professionals, compared to friends and family.

Young adults (18-20), adults 55+, and patients who are pregnant or breastfeeding are the least likely to feel comfortable speaking to their providers about their medical cannabis use.

## Why This Matters

- **Cannabis use has clinical significance**, including patient-specific precautions, potential drug interactions (e.g., supplements, prescription and non-prescription drugs, and alcohol) and impacts on anesthesia and post-surgical care.
- **Healthcare providers can play a vital role in informing patients of potential cannabis-related medical benefits, as well as risks such as potential side effects**, signs of problematic use or dependence, the dangers of cannabis-impaired driving, and the risks of consuming cannabis while pregnant or breastfeeding.
- **Reducing stigma can improve communication** between patients and their healthcare providers, resulting in optimal care and best possible patient outcomes.

## Resources

- **Take a Course:** To gain a basic understanding of medical cannabis use and the endocannabinoid system, MCA recommends the TMCIGlobal-developed online course: [“Maryland Provider Education: Medical Use of Cannabis v3.0.”](#) This course helps Maryland healthcare providers assess the evidence for treating patient conditions with medical cannabis, patient selection considerations, and specific precautions for medical cannabis use. Additionally, it addresses common administration methods and provides dosing guidance. Note: fee applies.
- **Clinical directors** are employed by licensed dispensaries to provide guidance on differing strengths, ratios and concentrations, as well as product types and routes of administration. Clinical directors are trained on potential benefits, side effects and/or contraindications, and may be a helpful resource in planning patient care. Learn more at [Clinical Directors \(cannabis.maryland.gov\)](#).