

The Endocannabinoid System

- Designed to maintain homeostasis and balance in our bodies.
- Modulates the endocrine systems response to environmental changes.
- Modulates inflammation.
- Regulates sympathetic “fight or flight” response.
- Endocannabinoids are a modified form of arachidonic acid.
- Multiple receptors throughout the body.

#POFPS43

Phytocannabinoids

- Derived from plants
- Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)
- Cannabidiol (CBD)
- Higher CBD:THC ratios are associated with less side effects.

#POFPS43

Current Numbers

- First legalized in California in 1996
- As of 5/17/18 there are 2,132,777 medical marijuana users in the US
- Roughly 37,000 in PA
- As of 6/14/2018, 25 dispensaries are open in PA
- As of 6/27/18, medical marijuana is legal in 30 states and DC
- As of 5/27/18, recreational marijuana is legal in 9 states and DC

#POFPS43

Medical Marijuana in PA

- Signed into law on 4/17/2016
- Changes on April 16, 2018
 - Approval of the sale of dry leaf or plant. It should be available in the Summer of 2018.
 - Allow access for the treatment of opioid abuse. PA is the first state to allow this.
 - Patients under 18 must be certified by a qualified pediatrician. This will be delayed by at least a year due to the lack of certified pediatricians.
 - 4 additional indications

#POFPS43

First FDA Approval of plant extract

- June 25, 2018
- Approved Epidiolex (CBD) oral solutions
 - Very low doses were effective
- Approved for two rare seizure disorders
 - Lennox-Gastaut Syndrome
 - Dravet Syndrome

#POFPS43

Peer Reviewed studies

- 60 total
- Categorized by diagnosis
- 68.3% Pro
- 8.3% Con
- 23.3% Not clearly Pro or Con

#POFPS43

Legalities in PA

- Only available to PA residents.
- Possession limit is a 30 day supply.
- It remains federally illegal.
- Transporting a federally restricted substance across state lines is a federal crime.
 - Even into a state where marijuana is legal.
- DUI potential
 - There is a threshold, like with EtOH.
 - 1 nanogram/ml

#POFPS43

Marijuana is Federally Illegal

- The federal focus is on large scale and illegal operations.
- June 8, 2018 – President Trump stated that he will likely support federal legalization of medical marijuana.

#POFPS43

Conant vs. Walters

- Affirmed the rights of physicians to recommend marijuana for their patients.
- Physicians in good faith, using honest medical judgments should not fear DEA sanctions.
- This protection applies whether or not the doctor anticipates the patient will use their recommendation to obtain marijuana in violation of federal law.
- Appealed by the government in 2002. Upheld citing patients first amendment rights to hear their doctors opinions.
- The government appealed again, but the Supreme Court declined to hear the appeal in 2003.

#POFPS43

Recommending vs. Prescribing

- Physicians can only recommend medical marijuana.
- Marijuana is a Schedule 1 controlled substance and cannot be prescribed.

#POFPS43

The Process

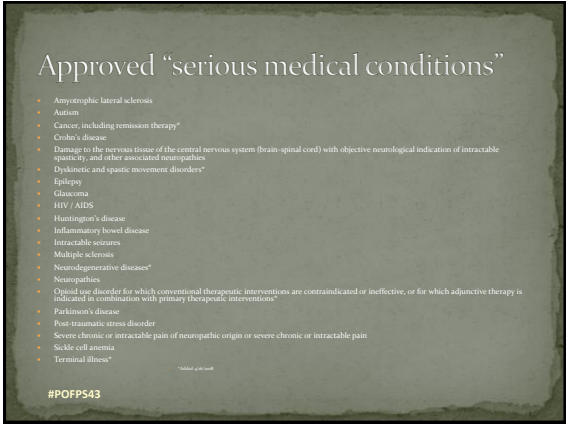
- The patient registers at PA.gov.
- Then visits a qualified certifying physician.
- Physician completes an online certification.
- Patient then obtains a medical marijuana card.
 - \$50 fee. May be waived for financial reasons.
- Patient can now visit a dispensary.
- The final decision as to what product they receive is made at the dispensary.

#POFPS43

Certification

- Thorough history and physical with documentation of their diagnosis.
- Documentation of prior treatments, failures, and side effects.
- Medical marijuana is not a first line therapy!
- Informed consent.
- Explanation of the process.
- PDMP must be queried.
- Can certify for up to 1 year.

#POFPS43







Not Permitted

- Smoking of medical marijuana remains illegal.
- It cannot be dispensed in edible forms (brownies, candy, etc.), however the patient or caregiver is permitted to incorporate medical marijuana into an edible form.

#POFPS43

Contraindications

- Previous hypersensitivity
- Pregnant or breast feeding
- History of uncontrolled mental illness
- History of psychosis
- Family history of schizophrenia
- Unstable ischemic heart disease
 - Marijuana can cause vasodilation, resulting in hypotension and subsequent tachycardia and increased cardiac demand

#POFPS43

Side Effects

- Somnolence
- Anxiety or paranoia
- Euphoria
- Dizziness
- Increased appetite
- Tachycardia, hypotension

- Elderly are more sensitive – Lower doses

- Due to THC; CBD helps to modulate these.

#POFPS43

Caregivers

- Designated by a patient.
- Over age 21.
- Must undergo a criminal background check.
- A parent or legal guardian of a patient that is under the age of 18. Patients under 18 require caregivers.
- Designated to be a caregiver by a parent, legal guardian or spouse of an individual approved by the department if no parent or legal guardian is appropriate or available.
- Caregivers may provide care for up to 5 patients.
- Parent or caregiver may administer medical marijuana at school.

#POFPS43

64 year old female with RA

- Chronic use of hydrocodone with minimal relief
- After several weeks of treatment with medical marijuana: “I can’t remember when I felt this good”
- Level of functioning significantly improved
- Best relief with pill form

#POFPS43

43 year old male with CP, chronic spasticity and pain

- “I feel better than I have in years”
- Reduced spasticity, improved ROM
- Able to get out of bed and “live my life”
- Best result with oral tincture and vaping

#POFPS43

18 year old male with Crohn’s Disease

- Previously treated with Humira, Methotrexate
- “Unbelievable” pain relief
- Abdominal pain resolution in less than 60 seconds with vape treatment
- Best result with pills and vape for breakthrough

#POFPS43

42 year old female with neuropathy

- Previously treated with various opiates, gabapentin
- Received “excellent” pain relief
- Had improved sensation after several weeks of use
- Best results with pills, vape, and topical

#POFPS43

67 year old male with failed Back Syndrome

- Had lumbar fusion; chronic pain
- Failed hydrocodone, flexeril, NSAIDS, gabapentin (up to 1800 mg)
- His pain is significantly reduced. Sleep is improved. ADL’s are improved.
- “I feel like I’m getting better”
- Best result with vape

#POFPS43