



Low-THC Medical Marijuana Bills: Leaving Most Patients Behind

It is heartening to see lawmakers' concern for the plight of patients with catastrophic seizure disorders. **Unfortunately, allowing access to only low-THC cannabis leaves behind the vast majority of those who can benefit from medical marijuana, some of whom also face life-threatening ailments.**

Relative Rarity

While cannabis preparations with significant amounts of CBD appear to be particularly effective at treating seizures, many patients' seizure disorders, and other debilitating conditions, respond best to strains with greater proportions of THC than are allowed under low-THC medical cannabis laws. Also, the number of individuals treating seizure disorders through medical marijuana programs is relatively low (0.9% in Arizona and 2.5% in Oregon and Colorado). It is imperative that these individuals are allowed to legally access medical marijuana — and the strain they need. It is just as important, however, to remember **that there are countless patients who suffer from a variety of debilitating conditions whose symptoms are alleviated by medical marijuana.** The vast majority of those patients have symptoms that benefit from strains of marijuana with more than trace amounts of THC.

THC: Why It Matters

Tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, is just one of the roughly 85 cannabinoids found naturally in marijuana. Clinical trials and the experiences of hundreds of thousands of patients have shown that THC, and strains of marijuana that include THC, provide important medical benefits for individuals suffering from pain, multiple sclerosis, nausea, and wasting disease. While THC does have psychoactive effects, patients use marijuana for relief, not for euphoria. Patients who inhale marijuana can titrate their dosage precisely to use only as much as they need, reducing or eliminating the euphoria. Some use marijuana only before bed.

Studies have shown that marijuana that includes THC can alleviate a host of debilitating conditions, including:

- **Nausea and appetite loss:** Researchers have found THC and marijuana with THC are effective anti-emetics and appetite stimulants for individuals suffering from the side effects of cancer chemotherapy or AIDS treatments.
- **Multiple sclerosis:** Research has found that marijuana with THC can alleviate spasticity.
- **Pain:** Several studies have found that marijuana strains that include THC can alleviate neuropathic pain — a notoriously difficult-to-treat nerve pain commonly found in amputees, AIDS patients, and patients with multiple sclerosis.

Conclusion

Medical marijuana legislation should not be so restrictive as to leave behind around 98% of the individuals who can benefit from it. THC has proven medical benefits, and individuals who can benefit from strains that include it should not be forgotten when legislators debate medical marijuana bills.