



# Finding Wellness with Medicinal Cannabis

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**A**s the stigma attached to cannabis continues to decline, a plant that has once stirred up immense controversy is slowly becoming a normalized part of North American culture. As a result of sweeping legalization on both medical and recreational levels, cannabis has become a vehicle for patients to find their own state of wellness.

The therapeutic values of cannabis as a medicine continue to draw attention from those seeking alternative treatment to opiates and antidepressants — trading in a medicine cabinet of pills for dried herb and concentrates.

As clinical research on cannabis is being published, new questions are arising from curious, potential patients who are hoping to discover what cannabis can do for their own health and wellness. The truth is, however, that for many patients interested in cannabis, the journey from prescription to medication is more complicated than it needs to be. The work I do with my company, Sail, aims to simplify the cannabis journey from beginning to end, for both patients and physicians. We hope to promote and showcase the therapeutic potentials of CBD, guiding patients along their cannabis journey.

## No Need for Smoke or Fire

What began with the discovery of the cannabinoid THC would lead to the discovery of the framework

that makes cannabis work within the human body. The endocannabinoid system has been a heavily researched topic fueling further discussions on how cannabis can promote a general state of wellness, balance and homeostasis.<sup>1</sup>

The second most well-known cannabinoid, CBD, presents itself as a unique option for many patients who wish to medicate with cannabis without the impairment that is so often tied to THC.<sup>2</sup> As a non-psychoactive cannabinoid, CBD binds to receptors within our endocannabinoid system offering the benefits of cannabis without the “high.”<sup>3</sup>

This cannabinoid in particular has immense potential for patients, especially those suffering from chronic pain and epilepsy.<sup>4</sup> Within many medical cannabis programs in North America, CBD is available in not just the typical dried herb, but also as oils that can be consumed in food products or administered through tincture under the tongue.<sup>5</sup> While regulations differ from state-to-state, many laws allow for specialized cannabis products like CBD oil tailored to heal, which the recreational market simply does not offer. Research continues to flow into the public sphere asserting that CBD can mitigate seizures attributed to epilepsy, manage chronic pain and even address certain mood disorders like anxiety and depression.<sup>6</sup> CBD marches on as an attractive treatment option for patients who are hesitant to try cannabis.



### Embarking on The Cannabis Journey

Those looking to become a patient who uses cannabis will need to obtain either a prescription or recommendation from their physician. Depending on where you live and the legal status of medical cannabis in that area, the conversation you have with your doctor about cannabis can be complicated and maybe even awkward. For the 29 states that have a legal framework in place for medical cannabis, patients may be turned away when requesting a prescription for cannabis from their own family doctor, likely because of the stigma tied to cannabis or a lack of education on the topic altogether.

### Bridging the Cannabis Knowledge Gap

The reason for these awkward conversations with doctors is rooted in their own hesitance to recommend a medicine that they are uneducated on.<sup>7</sup> Many physicians are experiencing a “cannabis knowledge gap” as their medical school education did not include anything on cannabis and physicians would not know where to begin if a patient asked questions about what strain or product would work best for their condition.

As a medicine, cannabis does not have a one-size-fits-all approach and patients are likely to try multiple products and strains to discover what best aids in their condition. Healthcare professionals need a way to accurately dose and recommend cannabis, use tools that leverage clinical data from cannabis patients and guide them in their decision-making process.

The knowledge base of clinically validated resources continues to grow and as hubs like PubMed continue to host articles on cannabis that focus on the efficacy of the plant as a medicine, my hope is that doctors will further utilize cannabis as a legitimate treatment option in clinical care. The ultimate goal is to aid patients in acquiring cannabis and setting them on a path towards healing.

For the patients that are beginning their cannabis journey, they need easy-to-understand, clinically validated resources that help them make informed decisions about their own cannabis use. The hope is to make this trial-and-error process of the cannabis journey as easy as possible, simplifying the process from beginning to end. Sail stands as unique clinical decision support to leverage data in a way that helps physicians make informed decisions on recommending cannabis that will set their patients on a path towards healing. Through

Sail’s software, we hope to offer understanding of the therapeutic potentials of CBD and offer guidance for patients. This software allows potential patients to connect with healthcare professionals and collaborate with Sail community members.

### Promoting Wellness with Cannabis

While cannabis may be intimidating, the pros continue to outweigh the cons. Harmful opiates that have the potential for addiction and overdose continue to be prescribed to patients with chronic pain, yet alternative treatment methods like cannabis are available. Cannabis has no potential for overdose, does not require patients to ramp up their doses and is not physically addictive.<sup>8</sup>

While opiates have their place in modern medicine, their harms are extensive, and it continues to be a mystery as to why opiates have such a prominent role in modern healthcare.<sup>9</sup> I hope that cannabis becomes a more normalized part of society, offering a path of healing for patients. €



Author Michael Burton can be found at [www.SailCannabis.co](http://www.SailCannabis.co).

### References

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