

# Welcome!

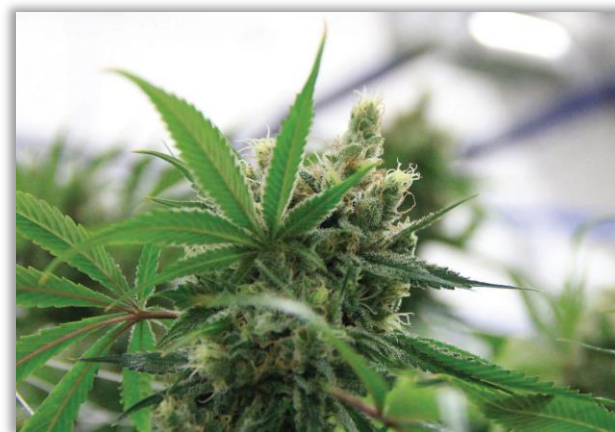
## 2020 Monthly WI Cancer Council Webinar Series

**Network** without  
leaving your desk.



# This Month's Topic

## Medical Marijuana in Wisconsin: A Cancer Perspective



Presented by:

**Amy Johnson, Policy Coordinator**

*WI Comprehensive Cancer Control Program*

# Agenda

- News and Updates
- Medical Marijuana Issue Brief
- Questions
- Upcoming webinars

# News and Updates

## Save the Date!

Regional Meetings *coming to you this Spring!*

- ❖ April 23<sup>rd</sup> - Madison
- ❖ April 30<sup>th</sup> - Milwaukee
- ❖ May 6<sup>th</sup> - Eau Claire
- ❖ May 7<sup>th</sup> - La Crosse
- ❖ May 13<sup>th</sup> - Minocqua
- ❖ May 14<sup>th</sup> - Green Bay

## Annual WI Cancer Summit

- ❖ October 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> @ Edgewater Hotel, Madison



# Medical Marijuana Issue Brief

- Released on February 10, 2020
- Find it on the WI Cancer Council's website at:

[www.wicancer.org/medicalmarijuana](http://www.wicancer.org/medicalmarijuana)

Wisconsin Cancer Council

Issue Brief

Volume 13 | Number 1  
FEBRUARY 2020

Medical Marijuana in Wisconsin: A Cancer Perspective

Devon Miller<sup>1</sup>; Noelle K. LoConte, MD<sup>1,2</sup>; Amy M. Johnson, JD<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health; <sup>2</sup>University of Wisconsin Carbone Cancer Center; <sup>3</sup>Wisconsin Comprehensive Cancer Control Program

Introduction

Wisconsin lawmakers are considering whether to legalize the medical use of marijuana for persons with serious medical conditions such as cancer. If legislation were signed into law, Wisconsin would join thirty-three states, the District of Columbia, and three US territories that offer legal access to marijuana for medicinal use, commonly known as medical marijuana.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the growing momentum to legalize medical marijuana at the state level, scientific evidence of marijuana's therapeutic benefit remains limited.<sup>2</sup> Current federal law highly restricts research that would demonstrate marijuana's therapeutic characteristics and/or adverse effects.<sup>3</sup>

With a particular focus on people coping with cancer, this issue brief explores what we do and do not know about the health effects of marijuana, and suggests public health and policy considerations for any state effort to legalize medical use of the drug.

KEY POINTS

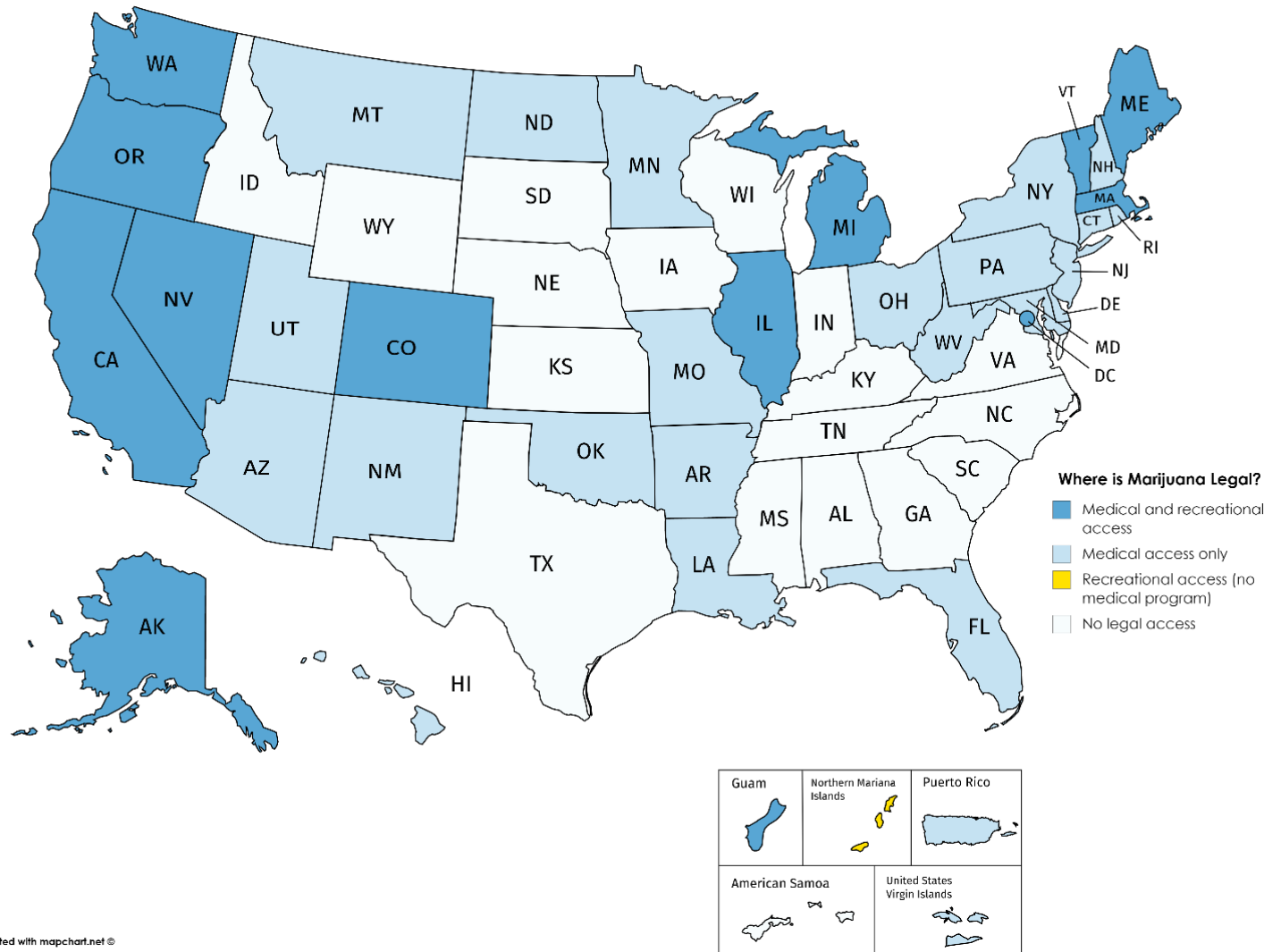
- Marijuana is illegal in Wisconsin. Some lawmakers want to make it legal for certain patients in our state.
- Medical marijuana is legal in most US states, but marijuana is still against federal law.
- Federal law limits the research of marijuana. We need more research to understand the effects of marijuana on people with cancer and other illnesses.
- Legalizing medical marijuana may affect other state laws designed to protect people and communities.
- Cancer patients deserve access to the safest and most effective treatments possible.



# What is Medical Marijuana?

- The use of the whole, unprocessed cannabis plant or its basic extracts, for therapeutic purposes.
- Delta 9 tetrahydrocannabinol, commonly referred to as THC, which is the agent responsible for producing the “high” of marijuana.
- Legal in 33 states, the District of Columbia, and 3 US territories.
- Cancer is the third most commonly cited medical reason for using marijuana.
- A patient must be certified by a medical practitioner, and added to a state registry.
- Most often consumed as a combustible, edible, pill, oil, or vapor.

# Medical & Recreational Marijuana States



# Legal Status of Marijuana

## Federal Law:

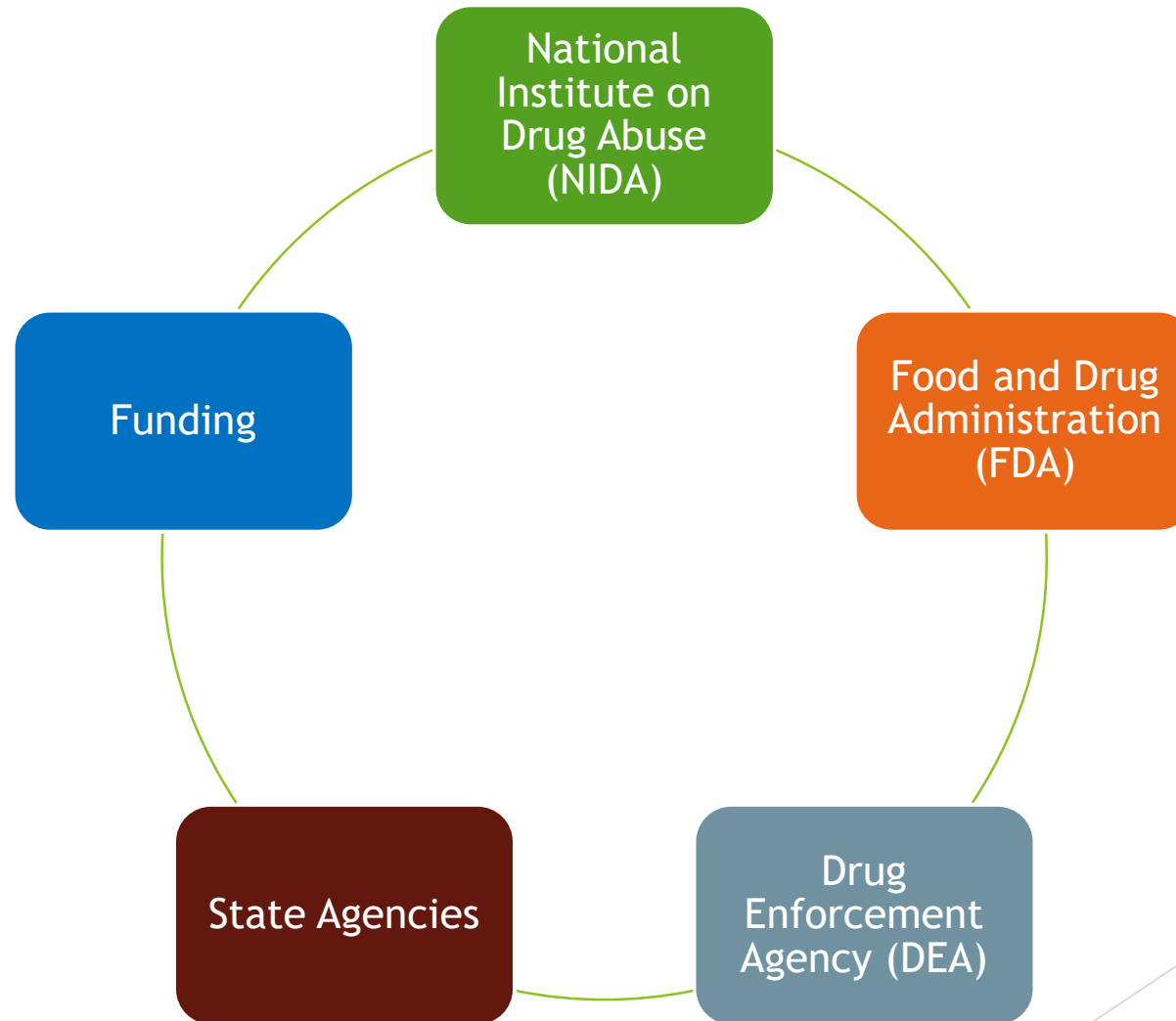
- Marijuana is illegal under federal law and is classified by the federal Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) as a Schedule I drug—the highest possible restriction level.
- Schedule I drugs are considered to have a high potential of abuse, without currently accepted medical use, and lacking safety for use under medical supervision.

## Wisconsin State Law:

- Schedule I drug under the WI Uniform Controlled Substances Act.
- Illegal to possess, sell, and manufacture marijuana under state law.



# Barriers to Research



# Marijuana Used for Research

- Limited supply
- Low THC
- Primarily combustible

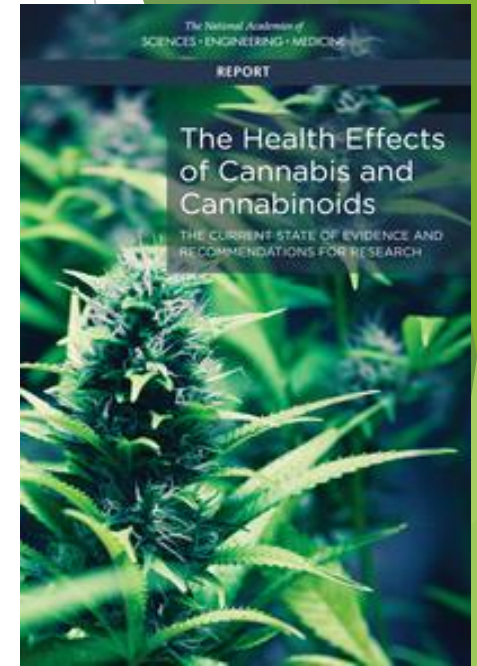


# Negative Health Effects of Marijuana

- Marijuana smokers typically inhale four times more tar than tobacco cigarette smokers.
- Regular marijuana smoking has been found to cause visible microscopic changes to the lungs consistent with the changes seen in tobacco smokers diagnosed with chronic bronchitis.
- Evidence from studies of light and moderate marijuana smoking does not suggest an increased risk of upper airway and lung cancer, but evidence is mixed for heavy, long-term marijuana smoking.

# National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

- There is **insufficient evidence** to suggest smoking marijuana increases the risk of prostate cancer, cervical cancer, malignant gliomas, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, penile cancer, anal cancer, Kaposi's sarcoma, bladder cancer, or esophageal cancer.
- There is **limited evidence** to suggest smoking marijuana increases the risk of one subtype of testicular tumor.



# National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine

- There is **moderate evidence** from several findings from good-to-fair-quality studies that smoking marijuana does not increase the risk for lung or head and neck cancers.
- There is **conclusive evidence** that oral cannabinoids are effective in the treatment of chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting.

# Concerns of Doctors

- Limited research
- Guidelines for standardized dosing
- Concerns about safety
- Study found 30 percent of oncologists felt sufficiently informed to make specific recommendations for use and dosing.



*Photo by kbrookes on foter.com*



# Public Health Considerations

- Conduct a Health Impact Assessment.
- Provide education for health care providers and health care systems.
- Investigate the dangers of impaired driving for people who consume marijuana for medicinal purposes.
- Update the state's indoor smoking laws.

# Policy Considerations

- Reclassify marijuana from a Schedule I drug.
- Employee drug testing
- List of all qualifying medical conditions necessary for patients to obtain and consume marijuana.
- Create a registry for qualified patients to obtain marijuana.
- Regulate the operation of dispensaries and producers.
- Develop consistent and accurate labeling of products.



# Policy Considerations, continued

- Establish routine testing of products for potency and ingredients.
- Set dosing guidelines and quantities of the drug allowable for possession by patients.
- Determine restrictions and penalties for those who violate the law.
- Designate state agencies with oversight of growers, processors, dispensaries, and patients.
- Consider public health implications, such as the impact on impaired driving laws.

# Legislation in Wisconsin

- **AB 220 / SB 377**  
Medical and recreational marijuana legalization
- **AB 570 / SB 507**  
Medical marijuana legalization
- **AB 750 / SB 683**  
Medical marijuana legalization
- <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/>  
“Law and Legislation” search box



# Conclusion

- Patients undergoing cancer treatment deserve access to therapies that safely and effectively reduce the physical and psychological toll of their disease.
- Increasing patient access to care, including effective symptom management, is a priority in the Wisconsin Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan 2015-2020.
- Because of federal barriers limiting research, the medical community simply does not have the scientific evidence to support claims.
- The use of medical marijuana may present benefits to some patients, while producing unintended health and safety consequences for patients and the public at large.

# Questions



# Upcoming Events

- ▶ **March 12<sup>th</sup>** – WI Cancer Summit & Exciting Updates!
- ▶ **April 9<sup>th</sup>** – Alcohol and Cancer Risk: The Unsettling Connection
- ▶ **May** – *No webinar, attend a Regional Meeting!*



*Have a topic that you'd like to learn more about or something you feel passionate about that you'd like to share with others? Let us know!*

# Thank you!

The recording, slides, and links to resources will be distributed after the call.