



# BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO CANNABIS AND MEDICAL MARIJUANA



SUNDAY, SEPT. 19, 2021

**LNP** | LancasterOnline

# CANNABIS 101

*A glossary of terms you should know*

## **CANNABIS**

Cannabis is part of a family of flowering plants known as Cannabaceae. Parts of the plant, such as dried leaves and flowers, have been used for medicinal and recreational purposes throughout history.

## **CANNABINOIDS**

The cannabis plant contains over 400 chemical substances, including a group known as cannabinoids, which are similar to the endocannabinoids that humans and other mammals naturally create in their bodies. The cannabis plant contains more than 100 cannabinoids, but the main ones are THC and CBD.

## **ENDOCANNABINOID SYSTEM**

Discovered in the 1990s, the human endocannabinoid system or ECS is a system of endocannabinoids, cell receptors and enzymes that is believed to help regulate many bodily functions, from sleep, mood and memory to appetite, reproduction and pain sensation.

## **THC**

Tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, is found in the resin produced on the cannabis plant's leaves and buds. It is the substance primarily responsible for the mind-altering "high" of marijuana.

## **CBD**

Cannabidiol, also known as CBD, is a cannabinoid like THC made by the cannabis plant. Unlike THC, however, CBD does not have psychoactive properties.

In Pennsylvania, CBD products bought over the counter that don't require a prescription must be derived from hemp plants. They also must contain 0.3% or less of THC, which at much higher levels gives marijuana users that "pot high." Only medical marijuana dispensaries can offer CBD products made from marijuana.

CBD products are touted for relieving everything from anxiety to chronic pain, but they are not regulated by the FDA like drugs.

## **TERPENE**

Terpenes are oils secreted from the resin glands of flowers. They are found not just in cannabis but in other plants as well. Terpenes give various strains of cannabis their distinct aromas and flavors. Like cannabinoids, terpenes also interact with the human body, and research indicates they may play a role in enhancing the effects of cannabinoids.

## **PROFILE**

An analysis of the concentration of various cannabinoids and terpenes in a product.

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

- The FDA has not approved the cannabis plant for any medical use. However, the FDA has approved several drugs that contain individual cannabinoids, including Epidiolex, which contains a purified form of CBD and is approved to treat two rare forms of epilepsy. Three other drugs, two containing synthetic THC and another a synthetic substance similar to THC, have been approved for therapeutic uses.
- Products containing THC or CBD cannot be sold as dietary supplements.

Sources for pages 2 and 3: Food and Drug Administration, National Institutes of Health, LNP Archives, New York Times, Congressional Research Center

# MARIJUANA VS. HEMP

Marijuana and hemp are both from the same species of plant, *Cannabis sativa*, and they share many of the same chemical compounds, including THC and CBD, but to different degrees.

Despite their similarities, hemp and marijuana are very different in their chemical and genetic compositions, how they are defined under law, and how they are produced and used.

Hemp contains a low level of THC — less than 0.3% — a level that's set by federal and state law. As such, it does not have the psychoactive properties of marijuana. Marijuana's THC levels are much higher.

Hemp is a variety of the *Cannabis sativa* plant grown specifically for industrial use. Hemp's seeds, stalks, oil and leaves are used in clothing, rope, paper, biodegradable plastics, paint, insulation, biofuel, food, mulch, animal

feed and more. Hemp also contains higher levels of CBD, found mostly in the plant's flower. And that's the compound that CBD oil advocates tout as being helpful for conditions ranging from anxiety and depression to chronic pain.

Lancaster County was a hotbed of hemp production in the 1700s, with two townships, East and West Hempfield, named after the crop. Industrial hemp was banned nationwide in 1937 because of its similarity to marijuana.

The 2014 Farm Bill, under President Barack Obama, allowed research institutions and state departments of agriculture to issue research permits for growing hemp, within limits.

The 2018 Farm Bill removed hemp — and products such as the CBD oil which can be derived from hemp — from the Controlled Substance Act list of illegal drugs.



Hemp grows on a farm in Lancaster County.

FILE PHOTO

# Hempfield Botanicals Expands Its Wellness Mission

Heather Kreider was in her 40s the first time she walked into a medical marijuana dispensary. She was a college graduate and a registered nurse, and had experience in the hemp industry. Yet she was still overwhelmed.

Kreider had an epiphany: If someone with her experience and education felt overwhelmed, imagine how others must feel.

"I was scared, nervous and didn't even know where to begin," says Kreider, who co-owns Hempfield Botanicals with her husband, Nathan. "I started taking classes, and it quickly became a passion of mine. Education is key. If you're educated on something, you feel confident."

Educating others about cannabis, including hemp and medical marijuana, and helping them to fully reap the benefits of both, has become a mission for Kreider. She will soon grow that mission exponentially when Hempfield Botanicals moves to its new location in the Accelerator Building, 100 W. Walnut St., Lancaster.

The 10,000-square-foot building currently under construction will be the new manufacturing home of Hempfield Botanical's range of hemp-based CBD products as well as its Make Scents line of natural skin care products. But it will also be so much more.

"We will be offering a safe haven, a wellness center, for those with mental health concerns like anxiety, depression, PTSD, etc.," Kreider says. "We're calling it our Hempfield Apothecary Wellness Hub."

## Among the Wellness Hub's offerings:

- A retail area that will sell health and wellness products, such as CBD oils and topicals, skincare products, and items to aid in the safe consumption of medical



marijuana products.

- Cannabis-friendly mental health offerings, such as support groups for veterans suffering from PTSD and alternative therapies like sound baths, meditation, restorative yoga and art therapy. "We just know right now mental health issues are at an all-time high, so our goal is to provide a safe space for individuals to find other ways to cope besides pharmaceuticals," Kreider says.
- Meet the Farmer events where the public can get to know medical marijuana growers, as well as the growers whose hemp plants are used in Hempfield Botanical products.
- A demo kitchen for cooking classes where medical marijuana card holders will learn how to effectively incorporate their medicine into food. Kreider also plans to host tasting events for the general public where guest chefs will share dishes made with hemp-based infusions. While it is illegal to share food infused with medical marijuana in Pennsylvania, the same is not true of hemp, which



does not have the same level of THC that gives marijuana its psychoactive properties.

- One-on-one medical marijuana consultations.

*continued on page 6*



## Heather J. Kreider

PA Licensed Registered Nurse  
Advanced Cannabis Training Certification  
PA Dispensary Agent Certification  
PA Medical Marijuana Card Holder



Medical Marijuana Education Hub,  
Hempfield Apothecary, coming soon to  
100 West Walnut Street in Lancaster.



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### How Heather can help:

Guide patients in navigating the state website to obtain an Medical Marijuana (MMJ) card.

Set up patient appointments with a prescribing physician.

### Provide recommendations for:

- ▶ Medical marijuana strains appropriate for the patient's symptoms.
- ▶ Route of administration of medication.
- ▶ Use of medical marijuana equipment.
- ▶ Transporting MMJ from the dispensary to the patient's residence, legally.
- ▶ Solving MMJ-related issues.
- ▶ Give patients valuable post-dispensary visit education to ensure they get optimal results from MMJ.

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Kreider hopes the consultation service can help simplify what can often be a very complicated and overwhelming situation. A consultation might include helping someone determine if medical marijuana is a good choice for them or suggesting the cannabinoid and terpene profiles that might best relieve the conditions they're hoping to treat. Kreider can also educate people on ways to consume medical marijuana and how to use various equipment, like dry herb vaporizers.

Recalling her own experience, she will also offer personal shopping, or what she calls "a concierge service for cannabis," that will include accompanying a client on their first trip to the dispensary and showing them how to order online in advance. She'll also offer delivery services for homebound Pennsylvania medical

marijuana card holders that do not have access or the ability to go into the dispensary themselves.

While a state-certified physician must certify a patient to receive medical marijuana, those physicians often don't have the time or the knowledge to educate patients on all aspects of marijuana use, Kreider says.

"I've seen some nightmares," she says, recalling one 70-year-old woman seeking relief from chronic back pain. She brought her medical marijuana card to a dispensary, felt overwhelmed and came home with an oil that she used incorrectly. She ended up getting high and scared.

"It's the perfect example of how much education in the cannabis industry is lacking," Kreider says. "That's really my main goal, to provide detailed information to make sure patients get the results they can expect from their

medical marijuana."

Hempfield Botanicals' new building does not yet have an official opening date, but Kreider expects it will be sometime in early 2022. Consultations are available now and can be booked on their website.

**For more information on Hempfield Botanicals products and services, visit [hempfieldbotanicals.com](https://hempfieldbotanicals.com).**



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# WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

## *Medical marijuana and CBD: What they are and what you need to know*

**LAURA KNOWLES**  
FOR LNP | LANCASTERONLINE

For many people, it's not always clear what the difference is between medical marijuana and CBD.

Pennsylvania has made medical marijuana, or cannabis, legal for treating a number of medical conditions ranging from epilepsy to treating migraines. CBD oil is legal as well and can be used for pain management, sleep disorders, and treating the nausea that can accompany chemotherapy for cancer.

### **Similar, but not the same**

First it's important to understand the difference between medical marijuana and CBD. While they are related, there are differences, says Dr. Adam Lake, medical director and family physician with Lancaster General Health Physicians-Comprehensive Care. Lake is among the physicians approved by the state department of health to certify patients for Pennsylvania's medical marijuana program.

"CBD is only cannabidiol, which is a chemical found in cannabis. Medical cannabis is the whole

plant, including delta-9-THC, which is the main psychoactive chemical in cannabis," Lake says.

He adds that there are also delta-7, 8 and 10 THC, which are much less studied. It is believed that delta-8 is psychoactive. Other products include CBN or cannabinol, which is mildly sedating and also psychoactive.

"Medical cannabis is a pathway where people can access delta-9-THC-containing products. The other cannabinoids are not regulated in the same way and thus are available at retail stores," Lake says.

The medical market in Pennsylvania now has a good system of analysis for its products, he says, so patients can be assured that they are getting a product with accurate labeling that is free of contamination or impurities.

"As a physician, this is really important to me," Lake says.

### **What you should know**

CBD has been studied a good bit, Lake says, though generally using the medical-grade CBD branded as Epidiolex, which is FDA-approved for

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# Ditchweed Craft Hemp Embraces The Healing Power Of Nature

Lancaster County was once a hub for the growth of industrial hemp, until it became illegal in the 1930s. But even decades later, remnants of the plant could still be found growing in wild places, earning it the nickname “ditch weed.”

When the 2018 Farm Bill legalized hemp once again, it provided the perfect opportunity for Ben Weiss to cultivate his longtime interest in the medicinal value of hemp.

It's no coincidence that he named his line of CBD product Ditchweed Craft Hemp, in honor of this wild-growing cannabis, since much of his work as a farmer, forager and herbalist is dedicated to rehabilitating the type of damaged wild ecosystems where ditch weed grows.

Ditchweed Craft Hemp is part of an umbrella organization known as Susquehanna Sustainable Enterprises, through which Weiss is showing how embracing the natural healing qualities of plants can in turn support efforts to heal the environment.

While the CBD products he creates through Ditchweed Craft Hemp come from locally grown, organic hemp (not the feral kind), they contain hand-made herbal blends featuring wild herbs that Weiss and his team forage locally themselves – setting Ditchweed Craft Hemp apart from other cannabis companies.

Sustainable foraging involves searching, identifying and harvesting foods that grow in the wild without human intervention. Weiss forages and harvests a small amount of plant and fungal material to craft the products he sells, providing income for the greater goal of regenerating degraded ecosystems through small-scale sustainable agriculture.

Ditchweed Craft Hemp is just one member of the Susquehanna Sustainable Enterprises family.

The first was Susquehanna Apothecary, which combines Weiss' love of foraging, brewing and gardening with his professional aspirations as an herbalist. Susquehanna Apothecary specializes in



PHOTO BY MICHELLE JOHNSON

herbal remedies, formulas and products made from responsibly foraged plants, like mushrooms, roots and herbs. Thanks to Weiss' own exposure to Lyme disease, one of the apothecary's specialties is the Buhner protocol, an herbal regimen popular with Lyme sufferers.

Susquehanna Apothecary a woman-run business managed by co-owner Ella Usdin.

“One of the goals of our business is to do things differently, and so it's extremely important to us to have a team of highly talented women in leadership roles, working together to share our creations with the community,” Usdin says. “I apprenticed with Ben for a few years to receive hands-on guidance in making herbal medicine. After working alongside him in the apothecary, I took on the role of apothecary manager. Now, I also help to design and hand craft our line of Ditchweed products and oversee their quality.”

Ditchweed Craft Hemp has grown to be a perfect complement to Susquehanna Apothecary. The hemp is grown locally on sustainable farms then cultivated, harvested and cured to retain its chemical makeup, flavors and character. All products are made by hand using only organic, wildcrafted and

chemical-free ingredients. They focus on whole-herb and full-spectrum products, rather than oils and isolates.

Ditchweed Craft Hemp products include two types of pure flowers, pre-rolls, and salves and tinctures incorporating high-CBD hemp.

The apothecary also carries a line of Forager's Formulas, five of which contain Ditchweed's high-CBD hemp. The blends are geared toward specific issues, including pain and sleep.

“My favorite aspect of our Ditchweed products is the blending of CBD with other herbs to create an array of flavors, aromas and effects,” Weiss says. “Our Morning Blend and Evening Blend pre-rolls are my personal favorites.”

**Ditchweed Craft Hemp products are available online at [ditchweedcrafthemp.com](https://ditchweedcrafthemp.com) or in person at Ellister's Elixers and Blade & Spade Coffee Apothecary, both in Lancaster.**

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PHOTOS BY MICHELLE JOHNSON

# Cannabis

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the treatment of seizures. This medication is usually used at higher doses than what people can typically afford to buy at a retail price, usually 400 to 1,600 mg per day.

“Common doses of CBD at retail stores are rarely more than 100 mg. So when someone makes the claim that ‘CBD is good for X condition,’ I would want to see if this was added to a standard set of medications or used by itself, and then the dose that was used,” he says. “As a physician, I care a lot about safety, and if I make a recommendation, I want to be assured that the patient is getting what they think they are getting.”

That’s because regulation and oversight of the potency of products is minimal in the CBD market and many products can be mislabeled in terms of their potency. Some may contain delta-9-THC, and this can cause problems, since it isn’t safe for everyone to take.

“Edibles are another challenging area, as the inaccuracy might be even worse if the cannabinoids aren’t evenly distributed through the product and someone is only taking a piece of the edible. It might be a significantly higher or lower dose than intended,” Lake says.

Generally speaking, Lake considers CBD safe to take. He wouldn’t recommend taking doses at 200 mg per day or higher without talking to a health care provider, as there is the risk of toxicity that seems to develop in a small percentage of people.

“I certainly have seen patients have some good outcomes adding this to their current medications, so it can help some people,” he says. “I’d be more concerned about starting to take regular doses of CBD if a patient was taking any other medication that required regular blood testing or had significant heart or liver problem.”

## Success stories

Dr. Sarah Cohen, of Resource Medical Center in Lancaster, has found success with a range of medical treatments using cannabis. Sometimes the results can be more dramatic, while other times, they are more subtle.

Cohen cites a severe form of epilepsy that most often affects children. Dravet syndrome is a rare, severe and incurable epilepsy syndrome that begins in childhood. Children may experience epileptic seizures that increase in frequency, causing them to have hundreds of debilitating seizures on a daily basis. The seizures are so relentless that the child is too exhausted to speak or function in any other way.

“I have seen dramatic results that essentially give a child their life back,” Cohen says. “It minimizes the seizures to one or two a month, and allows a non-verbal child to start to live a more normal life.”

In other cases, the results might not be as dramatic, Cohen says, but can be just as life-enhancing. She has treated patients with severe pain, neuropathy and endometriosis, helping to relieve pain that can be overwhelming. Chemotherapy patients can also find relief on several fronts, she says.

“It can help with appetite, which is so important when someone needs nutrition,” Cohen says. “It can also help with anxiety, relaxation and insomnia, which are so prevalent in cancer treatment.”

Cohen says she has had numerous patients who apply for consultation and a medical marijuana card tell her, “Cannabis saved my life.” They can finally overcome debilitating pain or deal with treatments for other conditions like chemotherapy for cancer.

## Risks and benefits

Cannabidiol, or CBD, and delta-9-tetrahydro-

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### WILL IT MAKE ME HIGH?

Though CBD and THC are both found in marijuana and interact with the endocannabinoid system, there are some important differences.

Many people associate marijuana with getting high. Indeed, THC may cause a person to experience a high. Often, THC produces the high people associate with using marijuana recreationally.

Despite both being cannabinoids, CBD and THC interact with slightly different receptors in a person’s brain. As a result, CBD is unlikely to get an individual high. Medical marijuana that is CBD dominant has minimal THC, which means that someone taking medical marijuana will not feel high when taking the medication.

Both CBD and THC are present in marijuana. When a person takes a CBD-dominant version of medical marijuana, they are using CBD from hemp, which is closely related to marijuana. THC originates in the marijuana plant, and people extract it from that source.

# Cannabis

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cannabinol, or THC, are two of many different cannabinoids present in marijuana. When in the body, CBD and THC interact with cannabinoid receptors to help treat or limit the effects of various conditions.

Potential uses of these cannabinoids include treating pain, nausea, cancer, appetite loss, eating disorders, Alzheimer's disease, glaucoma, multiple sclerosis and muscle spasms.

The most notable difference between CBD and THC is the lack of psychoactive effects for CBD, which does not typically cause the characteristic marijuana high of THC.

CBD and THC have similar effects for treating medical conditions. Among the conditions that can be treated with CBD are inflammatory bowel disease, seizures, depression, inflammation, psychosis, mental disorders, and migraines. THC has potential uses in treating conditions such as glaucoma, muscle spasticity, low appetite, insomnia and pain.

Both doctors agree that there are relatively few side effects with either CBD or THC.

CBD is regarded as being safe and the only potential side effects are likely the result of interactions with other medications. Someone consuming THC may experience some temporary side effects, such as dry mouth, red eyes, slower-than-normal response times, memory loss and increased heart rate.

CBD is available in gels, supplements, gummies, and oils, while THC can also come in different forms, including smokable products, oils, tinctures, edibles like brownies, and capsules. Smoking the products can have health consequences similar to other types of smoking.

It is always a good idea to consult with a doctor to determine what products may work for you and how they may interact with other medications. In the case of medical marijuana, patients will need to qualify for any of the 23 conditions that are valid in Pennsylvania, including amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's disease), anxiety disorders, autism, cancer, Crohn's disease, dyskinetic disorders, damage to the nervous tissue of the spinal cord, epilepsy, glaucoma, HIV / AIDS, Huntington's disease, inflammatory bowel disease, intractable seizures, multiple sclerosis, neurodegenerative disorders, neuropathies, opioid use disorder, Parkinson's disease, post-traumatic stress disorder, sickle cell anemia and Tourette syndrome.

"I have seen results where people finally find the relief they need to live their lives," Cohen says.

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# Digging Deeper.

## Discovering the Roots of Better CBD

In the CBD industry, there is often a lot of focus on the plant, the flower, processing, etc. While Farmer Steve Groff believes all of those are important, his primary focus goes deeper – quite literally.

“My expertise as a farmer is in soil health,” Steve says.

Cultivating healthy soil has been a passion for over 25 years on the Groff’s family-owned farm. Steve has spoken globally, consulted and written a book “The Future-Proof Farm” about the importance of regenerative agriculture and methods like no-till and cover crop farming.

These practices – and the farms that adopt them – are ones that major retailers are beginning to require for the future of food production.

When soil is healthy, full of nutrients, diverse with organic matter and roots in the ground year-round, there is a massive ripple effect on the global ecology. Water, air, wildlife and climate all benefit from living soil that is functioning as it should.

That same story has recently been brought to the surface by the Netflix documentary “Kiss the Ground,” narrated by Woody Harrelson.

Groff reports that the soil at Cedar Meadow Farm has been independently tested year-over-year to be even better than organic farms.

So, how does “soil health” relate to CBD?

“I believe that when foundations are good, everything grown from them is naturally better as a result,” says Steve. “For years, I’ve produced heirloom tomatoes, pumpkins, squash, gourds and more that are nutrient-dense and sold at Wholefoods, Giant, Blue Apron & Trader Joes.”



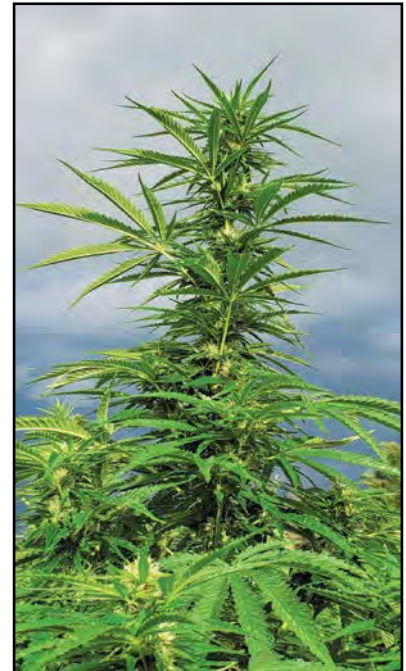
“That’s why it seemed so natural to plant hemp into this carefully cultivated earth,” he continues. “All plants draw from the soil, and hemp even more so. By placing focus on the health of our soil, everything grown from it is naturally better.”

Why else does soil health matter when it comes to hemp oil extract?

Many CBD products on the market today are a combination of harvests from various farms. This merges many different soil management practices and growing methodologies into one space for an unknown X-factor in the end result of the product.

Keeping the product sourced to a single farm with expertise in regenerative practices provides a strong level of confidence for consumers. This “single-farm sourcing” is a hallmark of Groff’s brand, Cedar Meadow Farm.

Groff places high value in consumer education and loves sharing the story of “Better Soil, Better Oil.”



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# MEDICAL MARIJUANA IN PA

## PENNSYLVANIA LAW

Gov. Tom Wolf signed a bill in 2016 legalizing the use of medical marijuana in Pennsylvania. The term “medical marijuana” refers to using the whole unprocessed marijuana plant or its basic extracts to treat a disease or symptom. Studies have shown that medical marijuana can assist patients suffering from serious medical conditions by alleviating pain and improving their quality of life.

## HOW DO YOU USE MEDICAL MARIJUANA?

Medical marijuana is available in the following forms:

- Pills, oil, topical forms such as patches or ointments.
- Forms medically appropriate for administration by vaporization or nebulization, including dry leaf or plant form for administration by vaporization.
- Tinctures and liquids.

## WHO CAN USE MEDICAL MARIJUANA?

Anyone with an approved serious medical condition who is a Pennsylvania resident and is certified by a doctor participating in the program can receive medical marijuana.

## WHAT ARE THE APPROVED CONDITIONS?

Only patients suffering from one of the following medical conditions can participate in Pennsylvania’s medical marijuana program:

- Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis
- Anxiety disorders
- Autism
- Cancer, including remission therapy
- Crohn’s disease
- Damage to the nervous tissue of the central nervous system (brain-spinal cord) with objective neurological indication of intractable spasticity, and other associated neuropathies
- Dyskinetic and spastic movement disorders
- Epilepsy
- Glaucoma
- HIV / AIDS
- Huntington’s disease
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Intractable seizures
- Multiple sclerosis
- Neurodegenerative diseases
- Neuropathies
- Opioid use disorder for which conventional therapeutic interventions are contraindicated or ineffective, or for which adjunctive therapy is indicated in combination with primary therapeutic interventions
- Parkinson’s disease
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Severe chronic or intractable pain of neuropathic origin or severe chronic or intractable pain
- Sickle cell anemia
- Terminal illness
- Tourette syndrome



GETTY IMAGES

## HOW DO I GET A MEDICAL MARIJUANA CARD?

**1** To register for the Pennsylvania medical marijuana program, create a patient profile in the medical marijuana registry at [padohmmp.custhelp.com](http://padohmmp.custhelp.com). You can register as an adult or as a caregiver of someone who needs in-home support, someone with a disability or a minor. You will need a valid Pennsylvania driver's license or state-issued ID.

**2** Once you've registered, schedule an appointment with an approved physician who can certify that you have a qualifying medical condition. Approved physicians are also certified through the registry. A complete list of approved physicians by county is available at [pa.gov](http://pa.gov). See page 14 for a complete list of approved conditions.

**3** Once the physician submits your certification, you can return to the registry to apply and pay for your medical marijuana card. Cost is \$50. Patients who participate in assistance programs including Medicaid, PACE/PACENET, CHIP, SNAP, and WIC may be eligible for fee reductions.

**4** Once you receive your card, you can purchase medical marijuana through any dispensary in Pennsylvania. For a complete list of medical marijuana dispensaries, including those in Lancaster County, visit [pa.gov](http://pa.gov). You will have to renew your registration for the medical marijuana program each year.

## MEDICAL MARIJUANA IN PENNSYLVANIA: BY THE NUMBERS

# 633,557

Patients and caregivers registered in the program

# 367,925

Active patient certifications as of mid-August

# 1,603

Approved practitioners

# 14.1 million

Patient dispensing events

# 40.4 million

Products dispensed

# \$3.4 billion

Total sales

*Source: Pennsylvania Department of Health*

# BE *Informed.*

**Eric Hurlock**

Digital Editor, Lancaster Farming  
Host, Industrial Hemp Podcast

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