

Immediate Release

Accepting Medical Cannabis In The Workplace

November 30, 2016, Calgary, Alta., – More and more Canadians are seeing the benefits from medical cannabis, however outdated medical policies at work are holding back sufferers from being allowed to receive the benefits to help with their ailments.

Kait Shane, director of patient care with Natural Health Services says, “We encourage employers to re-visit their drug policies and testing. We have spoken to patients who are suffering and have been forced to go without for fear of losing their jobs.”

Charles (who wishes to remain anonymous), a Natural Health Services patient says, “I use medical cannabis to alleviate my stress and anxiety. However after requesting approval from my employer they closed the application as quick as it was opened. I want them to have an open mind on the matter and know that this is something that I choose because it was more of a natural direction for me – as I’ve tried so many other options that haven’t worked. I’d like to see employers trust their employees when it comes to taking medication and know that I’m a responsible adult.”

Shane says, “What we’re hearing from patients is that they need to keep their medical cannabis use a secret for fear that they won’t be hired or even fired. In some cases where the patient discloses their medical cannabis use they are forced to go through a drug test and process to request approval, only to have it denied like Charles was.”

Richard, (who also wishes to remain anonymous) who uses medical cannabis to alleviate muscle spasms says, “My current employment policy states that because medical cannabis doesn’t have a drug identification number (DIN) my prescription doesn’t qualify as certified medication. The current policy also states that we are forbidden to use cannabis in any form, which includes for medicinal use.”

For starters, employers need to understand that Access to Cannabis for Medical Purposes Regulations (ACMPR) was created by Health Canada. Although this is sometimes a controversial issue, employers need to remember that medical cannabis is generally no different than other kinds of prescription medicine. When drafting new drug policies and testing to accommodate medical cannabis, it will fall under the same rules that are unacceptable for an employee to be impaired on the job by taking medications that impair their judgment and ability on the job. Impairment due to prescribed medical cannabis should not be tolerated either if it impacts the employees duties.

Shane says, “Medical cannabis can aid in chronic pain, Crohn’s disease, head injuries, HIV, migraines, sleep disorders, arthritis, back and neck issues, eating disorders, fibromyalgia... to name a few. It’s in the employer’s best interest to address their current drug policies and testing for the sake of these individuals who have seen positive results from medical cannabis.”

When a physician has prescribed the use of medical cannabis, it is considered as any other prescription drug. As outlined in the human rights legislation, employees in Canada must have a valid cannabis prescription to be protected by this legislation. The employee must disclose to their employer that they have a prescription. Employers who have a zero tolerance drug policy that does not address accommodation for medical cannabis may be in breach of the human rights legislation.

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@NatHealthserve encourages #employers to re-visit drug policies & testing to include #MedicalCannabis in #workplace
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About Natural Health Services

Natural Health Services (NHS) is a patient-centric full service medical cannabinoid clinic based in Calgary. We currently serve patients through multiple clinics in Western Canada. What sets us apart from others is our focus on compassionate access to medical cannabis for our patients. Our team is made up of physicians, nurses, cannabis experts, and customer care representatives. With a focus on harm reduction we support patients access to medical cannabis while following the rules set out in Health Canada’s ACMPR. As Western Canada’s largest medical cannabis prescriber, NHS is at the forefront of the industry. For more information visit Natural Health Services at <http://naturalhealthservices.ca/>.