



PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY  
OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

Dear editor,

Two months ago, Gov. Tom Wolf signed into law a bill legalizing some forms of medical marijuana for serious medical conditions including cancer, HIV, ALS, MS, PTSD, Parkinson's disease, epilepsy, and severe chronic or intractable pain. In the midst of the opioid epidemic, many of Pennsylvania's family physicians are eager to explore the potential of medical cannabis to serve patients as a non-opioid alternative therapy.

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The Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians (PAFP) was the only physician organization in the state that did not oppose Senate Bill 3, sponsored by Sen. Mike Folmer, allowing for the legalization of medical cannabis. Family doctors are responsible for treating a broad range of medical conditions on a daily basis, and the decision not to oppose this bill is in standing with the PAFP's long history of seeking ways to maximize family doctors' contribution to better patient care.

The PAFP has already reached out to Secretary of Health Dr. Karen Murphy and the Pennsylvania Department of Health to determine how the educational component of the Pennsylvania Medical Marijuana Program will unfold, as physicians will have to undergo four additional hours of training per the law's requirements. We will assist our members with information regarding implementation of the new law, provide required medical education, and share best practices now being employed around the nation from states where medical cannabis is already available.

In addition, in the latest issue of the PAFP's quarterly magazine, [Keystone Physician](#), we have taken a look at how similar medical cannabis legislation has unfolded in our neighboring state of Delaware from a family physician's perspective, giving the PAFP's 5,000-plus members an idea of which patients may benefit and what they can expect when the state Medical Marijuana Program takes full effect in 18 to 24 months.

Patients' health and safety is the number-one priority of Pennsylvania's family physician community, and we are enthusiastic about the possibilities and opportunities of medical cannabis in the Keystone State. Of course, more research and advanced study is needed to best address the clinical and social implications of legalized medical marijuana. We remain hopeful that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration will take action to ensure rigorous U.S. research is conducted. Our focus, however, is now on leading the implementation of Act 16 of 2016 in the most responsible way possible.

Sincerely,  
Robert Rodak, DO

President  
The Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians