

Therapeutic Cannabis in Schools

ACTNOW

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Colorado State Law

Colorado has allowed children with qualifying conditions access to therapeutic cannabis for over 2 decades. In that time, families have gained a much greater understanding of how its compounds can be used to help our children thrive. As our knowledge progresses, increasing numbers of school-aged children are successfully using cannabis as they would any other therapy. This has presented challenges for both families and schools when it comes to allowing access during school.

Over the last decade, advocates have worked hard to find a balance that protects their children and our schools. New state laws have provided a framework for each district to design a policy that works for them and their families. The latest bill [SB21-056](#) was signed into law in 2021. Here is a breakdown of those laws mean.

- School Boards are required to design a policy for the safe storage, possession, and administration of therapeutic cannabis.
- Schools are required to provide accommodations for the safe storage, possession, and administration for students with a valid state recommendation.
- This applies to all non-smokable forms of therapeutic cannabis.
- Any staff may volunteer to administer the therapy and they are protected under Colorado's Good Samaritan law.



Coltyn Turner, primary Crohn's/autoimmune
(Credit: CBS)

Allowing Onsite Staff Administration

Patient families often experience hardship which requires both parents to work outside the home and leaving every day to administer cannabis can place their jobs at risk. It is also incredibly disruptive to the child's sense of normalcy. We would never think twice about administering opiates, benzodiazepines, and amphetamines. Treating cannabis in a discriminatory manner can create a situation where they have to choose between a life changing therapy and their child's education.

Finally, requiring the parent be contacted to administer rescue medication can ultimately result in the death of the child. This is an extreme liability the school and its team are taking. In the time it takes for the parent to leave home, travel to the school, then get to the seizing child, they could suffer permanent damage and even death. This could be a death sentence for every single seizure disorder patient and one that can easily be avoided. This is a situation no school wants to face.

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Gavin Ragsdale, Doose Syndrome



Gavin suffers from [Myoclonic Astatic Epilepsy](#). This type of Epilepsy is rare, accounting for less than 3% of all pediatric epilepsy. He has 6 seizure types, all of which are treatment resistant and aggravated by pharmaceutical treatments. When his seizures cluster he can have 5-10+ seizures back to back.

Gavin uses several types of cannabis treatments to control his seizures, and the only way we can slow or stop Gavin's seizures is his 5ml CBD rescue spray.

Currently when Gavin's seizures cluster, the school must call me to come administer the rescue. The CBD spray can stop or reduce his seizures significantly within minutes, without ANY psychotropic side effects. It would benefit Gavin tremendously if the school was allowed to administer the medication immediately, rather than waiting for us to drive to school. This can take us up to 20 minutes to get to him, when the school could administer his CBD easily and send him back to class.

Our district in Colorado Springs (D11) currently has no policy for administering cannabis or hemp. We hope to help change policy to give Gavin and children like him access in school to their life saving medicine. -Melissa Ragsdale, Gavin's Mother

The time it takes to administer a rescue medicine can mean life or death for our children. <https://www.cdc.gov/epilepsy/about/sudep/index.htm>



PATIENTS ARE USUALLY REPLACING DANGEROUS AND INTOXICATING PHARMACEUTICALS WITH CANNABIS.

Benjamin Wann, Epilepsy



"Benjamin Wann is a senior in High School, and has a rare form of epilepsy. He is allergic to the nasal form of pharmaceutical seizure rescue. Ben is currently over 3 years and 8 months seizure-free using only [CW Hemp](#), and experience shows he responds much better to cannabis than pharmaceuticals. We want his nasal form of cannabis rescue, Cannatol with THC, on hand in the event of a seizure at school. Despite not having active seizures today, we know his latest EEG still shows he's "at risk" for having an unexpected & unpredictable seizure! His [Cannatol](#) should be at school to be administered immediately to save his life!!!"

-Amber Wann, Benjamin's Mother

Real Stories

Cannabis Myths

MYTH: There is no such thing as metered dosing.

Colorado requires potency testing which gives patients an exact number of milligrams contained in the product. From there, metered dosing is determined by patient needs and discussed with the doctor.

MYTH: Schools will lose Federal Funding if they allow medical cannabis.

To date, not a single school has lost federal funding because they allow administration of medical cannabis onsite.

MYTH: There are no guidelines for nurses to follow.

Guidelines from the NCSNB can be found [here](https://www.ncsbn.org/marijuana-guidelines.htm?fbclid=IwAR2DMXI_ZKDD60gvEnm7PL_4pRnlwY77DH9C6fqD8Q5slmgTWwwZ6xQlbDM). https://www.ncsbn.org/marijuana-guidelines.htm?fbclid=IwAR2DMXI_ZKDD60gvEnm7PL_4pRnlwY77DH9C6fqD8Q5slmgTWwwZ6xQlbDM



Marley Porter, Crohn's Disease/Autoimmune Disease

In January 2016, doctors told us that Marley was about to lose part of her colon to [Severe Crohn's](#) and all pharmaceutical options had failed by age 10. Cannabis changed all that. She needs her Cannabis medicine four times a day for consistent and effective treatment of her Crohn's Disease. We use a whole plant Cannabis medicine, all Cannabinoids - including THC and THCa! Because of Cannabis, Marley is healthy enough to attend public school. —Sarah Porter, Marley's Mom

Jonah Trujillo, PTSD, Autism, and Muscle Spasms

In 2013, Jonah Trujillo was on multiple pharmaceutical drugs all the way up to 2017. By that time, Jonah had already taken 13 different kinds of pharmaceutical drugs. As a result, he lost all his hair, became underweight, and did not eat. 2017 was the first year Jonah started medical marijuana it was life changing. He started to eat and his hair grew back. Jonah became happy and he wasn't sick any more. Pharmaceuticals are the reason Jonah has permanent spasms and medical marijuana is controlling it. It has given Jonah a new chance to thrive. Access during school hours would allow Jonah even more opportunities for success. - Vicki Trujillo, Jonah's Mom

01/2017

03/2017



03/2017

11/2017

Will I Lose My funding?



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

January 14, 2020

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Wann:

Thank you for your letter to Secretary Betsy advocating for HB18-1286 to be adopted as policy in the school district that your child attends. Your letter was referred to the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education for review, and I am pleased to respond.

I have read your letter, and I empathize with your situation. However, this matter is not within the purview of the U.S. Department of Education (the Department). The Department does not have the authority to determine state or local education policies or practices, unless these matters are specifically required in federal education statutes. Indeed, because education is primarily the responsibility of the state and local governments, the Department is specifically prohibited by law from exercising any direction, supervision, or control over such matters as curriculum, the teaching of particular subjects and graduation requirements, local administration and personnel issues, and allocation of state or local resources. If you have not done so already, you may wish to share your thoughts with your state department of education.

Thank you for your interest in improving public education.

Sincerely,

Brittney Lovitt
Management & Program Analyst
Control Correspondence & Communications Unit
Executive Office

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www.ed.gov

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access

No school has lost funding by allowing access to therapeutic cannabis.

Thirty seven states allow access.